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# FACTS AND HOW TO FIND THEM

A GUIDE TO  
SOURCES OF INFORMATION  
AND TO THE  
METHOD OF SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH

BY  
WM. A. BAGLEY



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## PREFACE

THIS is a book for journalists, writers, teachers, lecturers, and all those who deal in FACTS. Admittedly, literary research is not the only form of investigation: practical experiment and experience must count, but the written word is both the beginning and the ending of all forms of knowledge. To preserve our findings, we transmute them to the written, or printed, word. For the same reason, in order to ascertain what others have done before us, to profit by their experience and build on the foundations they have laid, we first consult written records.

But such are the countless ways in which knowledge is disseminated, so diverted into specialized channels, and almost submerged by torrents of fresh material the printing presses pour out every day, that one needs training to single out relevant facts from such a maelstrom of knowledge. Journalists, writers, and others in the same category, are professional fact agents. It is their duty to search for, and track down, stray information: to condense it into readable proportions; to interpret its meaning in the light of modern conditions.

This book gives guidance in research work. It tells of the main sources of information, what libraries to use, how to use the books when they are found, note-taking and classification, press cuttings and indexes, and other matters never before, so far as the author can ascertain, brought together in one volume. There have been attempts to provide "all you want to know" sort of books, but these, whilst extensive, fall very far short of completeness. At first sight they are very

## *Preface*

imposing. They may contain thousands of references, but to be really complete they would have to contain several million references, and be issued every week, if not every day, to merit their title.

In the present volume, where books are mentioned, they are given as *examples only*. The aim of this book is to show the principles underlying literary research. At the same time, the examples given are comprehensive, and in many ways this present work may be used as a book of reference. In other ways the author's aim has been to provide a readable book, though sacrificing all literary pretensions to practical utility. As a book on information, this book must, in itself, give the maximum amount of information, if its author is sincere. The author, a working journalist, has personally practised all the methods here given. He has often been asked "How did you find out all that information in your article on —? I didn't think you knew anything about the matter." Well, here's how.

In a book of this sort, it is inevitable that, however carefully the proofs are checked, mistakes will creep in. Should any such occur, the writer would ask readers to bear with him, and report such mistakes so that they may be corrected should a second edition of this book be called for.

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# F A C T S

## AND HOW TO FIND THEM

### CHAPTER I

#### *The World of Knowledge*

“Now what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but facts. . . . Stick to Facts, sir!”

Thus Thomas Gradgrind, “a man of facts,” in Dickens’ *Hard Times*.

We need not pursue Facts with the same grim determination as Mr. Gradgrind, but there is little doubt that the affairs of the world to-day are based upon Facts: the assimilation of old facts, and the finding of new. Although in these restless days when old ideas crash overnight and new ones come in breathless succession, we might wish that things would slow down a little, we must realize that in order to keep mankind’s energies and mental powers tuned up to concert pitch, opportunities must be found for exercising them.

New ideas; new facts; new methods. The well-oiled machine in constant use lasts far longer, and is a far better thing than one allowed to suffer the rust of disuse. Although there are thousands of new facts, most of them are combinations and permutations of old ones. An army of research workers is at work tracking down these facts, rescuing them from oblivion, classifying them and offering them anew to the world.

Most of the knowledge of the world is enshrined in books or other written and printed matter. The wealth

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of this material is amazing, and one of the first things that a student of research work must realize is that in the great majority of cases the information sought is printed somewhere. The task, of course, is to find *where*.

People write books for many reasons. Authorship is an honourable profession, and books are often written for the money they will bring. Other writers make writing their hobby; they are often able to undertake the writing of books which could not have been written as a commercial proposition. They are truly "labours of love." Professional people, such as school teachers, judges, artists, stage folk, etc., like to epitomize their experiences and knowledge in a book. It serves to add to their professional status and set a seal upon their skill or talent. Professional societies publish valuable "papers" containing information of great value and help to their members. Government departments publish reports of national interest. In any case the taxpayer and citizen is entitled to know what *his* Government is doing with *his* money. Newspapers and periodicals peddle information for its general interest. The facts contained therein may be of considerable importance, affecting one's livelihood or mode of life or thinking. Very often the facts are just dished up for our distraction and diversion.

To supply all these books and papers, research workers are getting the facts. Here again, they may be of several kinds, amateur and professional. The most obvious example is the journalist; not so much the one who specializes in flighty articles such as "Do Women Make the Best Wives?" but the one who writes technical and "fact" articles. Journalists are the middlemen of the "fact" industry. They seek out the facts, sort them out, and pass them on at a profit. The journalist who writes an article on "The Silk

## *The World of Knowledge*

Trade of Japan" is usually quite unconnected with any commercial enterprise, and if he made the revelation that three-quarters of the factories were in the last stages of bankruptcy, he, personally, would not be in the least worried or concerned. His readers probably might, particularly if the article was in a trade paper.

Again, although in actual practice the writer usually has some good knowledge of the matter before he writes the article, this is not always the case. The writer, sensing that such an article was topical, and a profitable "market" awaited his writings, might set out to get the information, although his present knowledge of Japan and the silk trade was very elementary. In order to work on a business basis, he can afford to spend only so much time on research. Yet he succeeds in writing an authoritative article on the matter. How is this?

People who think they are "in the know" say, "He gets it all from books and other people's magazine articles and newspaper cuttings." The first implication is that he steals another's ideas. It is as well to answer that charge straight away. The tracking down of items of information is a skilled task. One has to pick out the relevant items from a great mass of material. This demands training and skill. Furthermore he ropes in isolated but related items, and views them in a new perspective. He invests the material with his own personality, or, in the case of more staid and impersonal publications, with the authority of whatever society or body he is working for. The research worker must avoid becoming a mere hack.

The second implication is that it is delightfully simple to copy extracts from others' books. This is generally absurd, for one must know what books to look in, where the books are to be found, how to find them

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in the library, how to find out what part of the book to read, and how to absorb the information thus located. Put this "knowing one" in a fairly large library and ask him or her to track some simple fact, such, for example, as when did Chopin compose his "Funeral March"? The result is usually pathetic to behold. The would-be researcher is utterly lost in a forest of books. He or she might make a wild plunge into the contents of the nearest bookcases, or thumb over the catalogues in a hopeless manner. Behold the surprise when the trained research worker goes almost instinctively to the right book, and the right page in the book.

Many large industrial and commercial enterprises have their research departments where business and technical books and magazines are stored. The information thus culled is available for planning new projects and developments. Another field involving much research is in the cinema studios. On the one hand we have laboratory research (a sphere which does not at the moment concern us), whilst on the other hand seeing that the studios have to create an artificial world of their own, involving all countries, times, and peoples information is always needed as to what these people wore, looked like, etc., so as to secure the right effect. What sort of headgear did Turks wear in 1780? What does a Chinese laundry in San Francisco look like? Did women wear riding breeches in 1840? What sort of forks did the people of Queen Anne's time use? What does a British army barracks in China look like? All these questions the studio research worker will answer.

Then there are social surveys, which are held not merely to amuse the surveyors, find employment for the funds of various trusts, and satisfy a queer enjoyment of statistical computation and tabulation, but rather to satisfy a scientific desire to know certain facts.

## *The World of Knowledge*

in an accurate and orderly way so that they can be applied to the better understanding of social and economic conditions and organization. Facts which do not, in some way, increase useful knowledge are not much good.

Lastly, there are many people who engage upon research purely as a hobby. They do not intend to sell their information. They do not intend publishing it for their own glorification and for the propagation of their ideals. They just find interest in following the paths of knowledge, and their mental exercise gives them a happy, active, inquiring mind which is as important as a healthy body from the physical point of view.

They are not usually "bored stiff," like many shallow-brained folk are to-day when deprived of artificial amusements such as the cinema and organized games. This present volume is not intended to be one in praise of book-reading: rather is it a treatise on reading for hard facts rather than beauty of literary style (unless, of course, your inquiry is concerned with literary gems), but it might here be remarked that whatever one's interests, one can find inspiration, diversion, and pleasure in the glorious company of books.

The curiosity of children is well known, and some of their posers parents find difficult to answer. Curiosity and observation invoke pleas of what-why-where-when-how-who? all day long. This is a healthy sign of a growing mind. Without this natural curiosity, the young mind would be atrophied. When one becomes older, one falls into a rut, and has few interests outside one's trade or profession. Indeed, in many of these, the notions and ideas are very limited and effete. They are sheltered under the name of "trade secrets" sometimes. A few of these mysterious "secrets" (which

any research worker could soon discover) hide the lack of real modern information and ideas.

Sometimes when we see "Letters to the Editor" about such abstruse subjects as Hittite inscriptions and Peruvian sun-worship from Lt.-Col.'s and other unlikely people, we are apt to smile and regard them as mild cranks. What is the use of all this out-of-the-way knowledge? You may as well ask what is the use of knocking a little white ball round a field with a stick? One is physical exercise, the other is mental exercise. They both give pleasure.

Even if we are not out-and-out research workers, either in a professional or an amateur way, we have often occasion to look up some subject, especially if we be teachers, lecturers, or clergy, etc. There is a wealth of material available to work upon, but it is very tangled and we need training to know how to unravel it. In the following pages an attempt will be made to show the main principles of research.

It is neither possible, nor desirable, to go too minutely into some of the sources of information, as the field is so vast, and the approaches so many, depending on what subject you are interested in. If this book was being written solely for students of history—to take one example—it would be possible to give fairly adequate lists of all standard textbooks, reference books, year books, learned societies, journals, museums, etc., connected with the subject, but I presume that only a fraction of my readers are definitely interested in history. Others may be studying politics, production of wood pulp or peanuts, life of Robert Burns, magnetism, business efficiency—anything. A work of encyclopedic proportions would be needed to provide at all adequate references to every possible subject, and then it would be out of date the week after the printer

## *The World of Knowledge*

received the proofs of it, so great is the spate of new books.

Certain year books have attempted this, but in the main, the contents, though they look "big" and imposing, are not so valuable as they first appear. The most valuable book of this kind is the "ASLIB Directory," which will be dealt with later in this book.

So far it has been assumed that the information desired will be found in books (by which term is meant also pamphlets, leaflets, prints, newspapers, MSS., etc.). There are other sources, however. We can originate some facts ourselves. We can draw our own conclusions from the study of objects in museums, for example, or we can obtain, in certain cases, the information verbally from someone who knows. With the growing knowledge of various founts of information we can attain speed and confidence in research. On the one hand we shall not be too disappointed if the search proves harder than we anticipated. On the other hand, we shall not plod hopelessly on when the information desired is too obscure to be worth while, and the time better spent otherwise.

At the beginning of this chapter it was stated that the research worker should be aware what a vast field of book material there is for examination. Another point to realize is that there is far more spirit of helpfulness and goodwill, especially in the world of learning, than is generally thought. Partly this is due to a sort of freemasonry among intellectual workers, but if we are sceptical enough to analyse these "good turns" we shall find that there are other causes.

Individuals may give you information because they are flattered to think that you regard them as experts. Business concerns give it to you because it creates goodwill, which is an advertisement for them. Public officials often take a broad view of their duties. The

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officials of public libraries are paid to help you, but apart from the fact that they are paid to do it, they are mostly enthusiasts over their job, and are only too glad to be of assistance. As a rule they are organized for a better service of information than is at present demanded. Make friends with your local public librarian. He knows more about his stock of books than you will ever do, and he can prove a useful ally.

The present writer is quite prepared to believe that there are incompetent and indifferent librarians soured by a small grant and a hovel of a library. He has not, however, yet met any, although he has made use of many libraries, great and small.

The librarian does not care what you want to know, or why. He assumes that you have real need of the information, and it is up to you not to abuse his goodwill by irrelevant questions. Tell him *exactly* what you want. Do not, as so often happens, let him have to coax it out of you, and waste time by getting the wrong books.

Books, and other sources of information, are like tools. We have to learn not only what tools to use for a certain job, but the right way to care for them, hold them and manipulate them. Not all classes of workmen use the same tools. A carpenter, expert with a saw and plane, might find it at first strange to use a mason's mallet and chisel. In the same way, a student of medieval wall-paintings who had traced most source-books on the subject would at first find it strange to trace the best books on, say, French politics.

Our capacity for holding knowledge is limited and confined to essentials. The well-informed man is not so much the marvel who has a phenomenal memory, but one who knows exactly *where* to get the required information. What we ought to know is Knowledge. What we can find out is Information.

## CHAPTER II

### *A Preliminary Survey*

THE things in this world are very closely interwoven. Science is not confined to the experimenter's laboratory, but is allied to Industry. Industry suggests Geography—the sources of raw materials, location of factories and works, the places where the goods are to be sent, etc. History is allied to Biography. There is an old question as to whether famous people made history, or whether history made them. So we could go on, but the point to be established is that, in research work, we must analyse each inquiry, for it may contain two or more composite facts requiring reference to two separate sources.

Take, for example, a simple inquiry: Who was the reigning monarch of England when the famous "Rocket" made its maiden journey? We have to find out when the "Rocket" was run, and this may be done by looking up some book on transport or railway history, or else looking up the inventor, and then referring to his biography. Having ascertained the date, it is a simple matter to complete the second part of our question.

Some inquiries are, of course, much more complicated than this, but always pare them of unessentials to narrow down the facts.

#### *Work from Simple to Complex*

This is another golden rule. It is all very well to find out, as will be described later, that an article on a subject you are interested in appears in an obscure century-old country newspaper, the files of which can

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be seen in a library many long miles away. A book in your own library is much better. If not in your own library, then in the local public library, and if not there, in one of our larger libraries. It seems to be the fashion for anyone having some research work to do to apply at once to the famous British Museum Library. True, this is perhaps the finest library in the world for research work, but the result is that the authorities have had to limit admission to those who can show that they cannot conveniently get the information elsewhere. In the great majority of cases, these people can.

Therefore, before you think of using the large libraries do not do so just because they are "big," and imagine you will get superior service. You will be most welcome, and get good service, of course, but you will help decentralize library work by first applying to the local library, or to one of the smaller specialized libraries.

In the same way, save yourself as much trouble as possible by working from simple to complex in the actual selection of books. If you have pared down your query to essentials, as indicated at the beginning of the chapter, you should have a clear idea of what you are looking for. Look up the matter in an encyclopedia or appropriate year book first. Often your query is solved right away.

Suppose you are looking for a description of a small town—so small that it warrants only the briefest of mentions in an encyclopedia or gazetteer. Upon further search, you find a popular tourist handbook to the county in which the place is situate, and also a ponderous tome "The History of the Manor of ——" written by some long-winded local incumbent in the middle of last century, describing the place in tedious detail. You will naturally look in the simple guide

### *A Preliminary Survey*

book first, but if your query remains unanswered, look in the larger book.

Suppose the query still remained unanswered. The clerical gentleman probably mentions sources from which he drew his information, and you will then track down these to see if the information you want is among them. You might want to know who first built the now-ruined priory, and your search takes you among old deeds and parchments. You may then get what you want. But suppose you spent hours among the musty documents only to find that the information is given in the encyclopedia, the county guide, or some standard work such as the *Victoria County History*, a fact you could ascertain inside a quarter of an hour!

Look, therefore, in the most likely place. Work from the broad to the narrow. Do not try to be "clever" and show off your bibliographical skill.

### *A Survey of the Field*

Working, therefore, from broad to narrow, let us first take a preliminary survey of research books. It is presumed that the reader is already a book-lover and a member of the local public library. If such is not the case, steps must be taken to rectify this immediately. Browse round the shelves, particularly those in the less-used parts of the library. Find out how the books are shelved and catalogued. Find out whether there is a reserve stock of rarer or lesser-used books. Particularly use the reference room. Note well what directories, year books, annuals, etc., are taken. You might even strike up an acquaintance with the librarian. Let him know you are a research worker. Do not be afraid to ask for more than the usual number of books (provided you really need them). If the books are not in the library, ask for them. They can usually be obtained

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on loan for you, especially if your library subscribes to the National Central Library.

Get to know what different publishers issue, especially those who specialize in the books in which you are interested. Read the book reviews and notice any books that are likely to interest you. In other words, get to know books.

Visit all the libraries you can. Note their specialities and methods of shelving and cataloguing. This is not all done in a day, but is a part of your education. You will begin to feel at home in a library. Wherever you are, there is nearly always a public library whose Reference Room is open to you. (The privilege of borrowing books to take home is reserved for rate-payers as a rule.) A most useful book to be consulted at this stage is—

Rye, *Guide to the Libraries of London*.

This was originally written for University students, but it has long outgrown its academic exclusiveness. Its contents should be studied by all researchers working in the Metropolis.

Other guides are: Newcombe, L., *The University and Collegiate Libraries of Great Britain and Ireland, 1927*, and Hoffkin, Hamburger, L., "Library Directories" in the *Library Journal*, 1928, and, of course, various year books, mentioned elsewhere.

The semi-private libraries of various societies, institutions, etc., and the entirely private collections of various book collectors great and small are often available to the genuine research worker if the material is not to be had elsewhere. One should inquire.

### *The British Museum Reading Room*

The first thought of anyone having any research work to do, and living in and around London, is to apply directly to the Reading Room of the British

## *A Preliminary Survey*

Museum. Except during the early morning, and late in the afternoon (when it is too late to order any books), the great circular room has always its full complement of about 500 readers. As already stated, so great is the congestion that to avoid impedance of genuine literary work by casual readers, the Museum allots tickets only to those who can show that they have definite literary work in view, and that they cannot do it elsewhere. No genuine research worker need fear that he or she will be frozen out of the Reading Room. Rather should this restriction be welcomed in the interests of research workers. In many ways the Museum Library is unique, but in some ways the same, or even better, service is offered by smaller, specialized libraries. The present writer uses quite half a dozen libraries besides the British Museum Reading Room.

Our line of inquiry is this—

- (1) What *exactly* am I looking for?
- (2) What books, etc., will help me?
- (3) Where can I get these books?
- (4) How shall I find their position in the library I choose?
- (5) How shall I extract the maximum information with the minimum trouble?
- (6) How shall I record and store this information?

There are other questions such as—

- (7) How shall I sort out and rewrite this information?
- (8) How shall I dispose of it? (Book, lecture, lesson, etc.)

but it is obviously not within the scope of this work to deal with the actual writing of books and articles. It is our aim to gather the straw before we can make the bricks.

## *Facts and How to Find Them*

(9) Assuming I cannot find any mention of my subject in printed books, where else shall I inquire (personal inquiries, etc.)?

(10) Where can I get illustrations, portraits, etc.?

In the following pages, an attempt will be made to show how these questions can be answered.

### *Catalogues*

There are many systems of classifying books and papers, so that the research worker will, until experience is gained, usually spend a good deal of time in locating the books or their press numbers. The time is not really wasted since it all helps to gain experience in library work. Should one become hopelessly fogged, the help of a librarian or assistant should be sought.

Books may be classified under—

(1) Author.

(2) Subject.

(3) Author and Subject combined in one alphabetical series (perhaps with Titles, too). This is called "Dictionary" cataloguing.

### **AUTHOR**

Anonymous authors, or those who write under initials, etc., are nuisances, and a thorn in the side of an otherwise perfect form of catalogue, and the one most used. Assuming one knows the name of the author, one merely finds the name in the catalogue and runs down the list of works until the desired one is found.

If we do not know the initials, we shall be lucky in having an author with a not too common name. If his name is Smith, Brown, Dubois, Müller, etc., we are in for a long search among many hundreds of entries. In this case, it is quicker to look in the subject

## *A Preliminary Survey*

index. For example, suppose we are looking for a book (title not known) which has something to do with monotype machines by a man named Brown (initials not known). The quickest plan is to look in a subject index under Printing or Typography, and see if there are any books by a man named Brown.

Foreign celebrities are indexed under the English form of their names, e.g. Goethe (Johann Wolfgang von). Indispensable appendages are retained, e.g. De Vere, Van Buren, Le Fanu, etc. The author of a book "by W. M. T." would be entered as by T., W. M. A book by J. C., D. D. would be entered C., J., D.D.

Very often the papers of a society, etc., written by an individual, but on behalf of the society, have no author mentioned. The society is the author. A little experience is needed to track some of these anonymous works down. They are often grouped under various headings: catalogues, encyclopedias, directories, liturgies, hymnals, etc. Almanacks are listed as "Ephemerides." Publications of International Congresses are under "Congresses." An anonymous work entitled, say, "The Book of the Caravan," might be listed under "Caravan" in an author catalogue.

Laws and Official Documents are usually entered under the names of the places they concern, with a sub-heading of the issuing authority.

### SUBJECT LIST

To many research workers this list is more important than an author list. We have often to gather some information on a certain subject—say, Television. We do not know, or care, *who* wrote the books provided they are good ones. A subject list is indispensable in this case.

How are the books to be grouped? There are many thousands of headings we could classify books under.

## *Facts and How to Find Them*

A small library having, say, six books dealing with tools, could group them with other books dealing with general engineering and handicrafts. A large technical library might have a hundred or more books on the subject. There might be books on Ancient Egyptian Tools, Machine Tools used in Stone Cutting, modern Carpenter's Tools, Hints on Grinding Tools, etc. Each, apparently, is a group in itself.

### DEWEY SYSTEM

Of all the systems tried out at the large libraries, the most ingenious, and most widely used, method of classifying books is the Dewey, or Decimal, system (or some form of it). In this, all books are classified under one of the following heads (it is usual to class fiction and biography separately).

000	General Works.
100	Philosophy.
200	Religion.
300	Sociology.
400	Philology.
500	Natural Science.
600	Useful Arts.
700	Fine Arts.
800	Literature.
900	History.

Now by subdividing these main classifications (by adding a second figure) we can further classify a book. Engineering, for instance, is a useful art (600), and is indicated by 620. Agriculture is another useful art, 630. Medicine is 610. There are several kinds of engineering—civil, marine, hydraulic, etc.—so a further subdivision of 620 is called for. Thus mechanical engineering is 621. Machine tools, as a branch of mechanical engineering, calls for the subdivision 621.9.

## *A Preliminary Survey*

It will be seen that one could go on subdividing almost indefinitely. We could have a number running to about ten decimal places to denote books about copper kettles made in the City of London by one-legged workmen in Queen Anne's time.

There are drawbacks to every human scheme, and the Dewey system is not without its critics. The chief objection lies in the unnatural rigidity of the ten divisions. They are merely arbitrary. If the whole ten divisions or subdivisions are not required, it is a perfectly easy matter not to use them all. But what if more than ten divisions are required? The use of letters of the alphabet in addition to figures has been suggested.

### *Form of Catalogue*

For all usual purposes, a *card-index* is best, on account of the ease with which the cards can be withdrawn, altered, added to, etc. These cards should be handled by the *edges*, not the tops. This not only preserves the cards, but is much quicker. A *sheaf* catalogue is much the same thing except that instead of cards we have slips of paper, and instead of the cards being contained in a box, they are held in a loose-leaf book.

At a very large library, e.g. at the British Museum Reading Room, where hundreds of readers are waiting to use the catalogue, such a card index would cause congestion and delay. Instead, there are some hundreds of large volumes like ledgers with blank leaves of very tough paper. Every month, a printed list of acquisitions is produced, and all the items in this sheet are cut out and pasted into place in the books. When such catalogues were started, a list of books already acquired was printed, and arranged in alphabetical order. This list was pasted down the left-hand half

## *Facts and How to Find Them*

of all the pages, the right-hand half being left blank for the insertion of fresh slips approximately opposite the place they belonged to in the left-hand column. In course of time, the right-hand column gets full up, and every five years or so, a new volume is made. All the right-hand slips are printed in their proper place, and take their place on the left-hand side. So the catalogue grows.

Because of the congestion of slips on the right-hand side, there comes a time when it is not possible to paste them in the correct alphabetical order, owing to there being no room. Accordingly, each is pasted as nearly correctly as possible, where there is room for it. This should be borne in mind by those searching the B.M. catalogue.

Every five years or so, a printed catalogue, in proper bound volume form, is issued, and is available to anyone who cares to purchase a copy. This is issued in subject classification. There will come a time when this printed catalogue is about five years old, and rather out of date where modern books are concerned. A connecting link, however, is the "Rough Subject List." This is another series of pasted-in catalogues where certain of the slips accumulated in the ensuing five years or so are roughly classified under various subjects. This catalogue is therefore a good guide to the *latest* books on whatever subject one is interested in.

### *Mistakes in Catalogue*

It can be taken for granted that in all good libraries the catalogues reach a high standard of accuracy, but there are rare occasions where one suspects the catalogue to be wrong or not brought up to date. Often one is right. Certain books might be purposely withheld. It may not be the policy of the library to issue them until they are so many years old.

### *Library Difficulties*

One cannot learn the lay-out of a library and its method of cataloguing in one brief visit. As a rule the librarians are extremely helpful, but now and again the incompetence of a subordinate assistant causes friction, and should this happen, one should inform the superintendent. To avoid looking for a book or paper in some inconvenient place, assistants have been known to affirm that the book desired is "in use" or "on loan." It is difficult to prove that it is not. If on loan, it is a sound reason against lending books.

Another petty annoyance is the time taken to get the books, especially in the larger libraries. One should bear in mind that many of the less-used books are stored some minutes' walk away, and have to be located. Moreover, several hundred readers may be wanting several hundred books. This is another reason for trying the small libraries first. Although the book requisition form may be dispatched by pneumatic tube, the books have to come on a trolley pushed slowly by hand. It is a good plan to devote one visit to looking up the catalogue numbers of the books one may require, and filling in the forms for future use. In most libraries books may be ordered in advance, and, after a day's use, reserved again. Alternatively, one can take some other work to get on with whilst waiting—some proof corrections, writing, etc., since many libraries have spacious desks with helpful conveniences.

Librarians usually try to arrange their books so that those most in demand are nearest to hand. Thus in the British Museum Reading Room, there are thousands of standard works on the ground floor, to which readers have open access. Books next likely to be in demand are on the upper gallery shelves, and so on.

## CHAPTER III

### *Bibliographies*

“WHAT books are there on the subject?” This is one of the first things a research worker asks. Bibliography is, strictly speaking, the *science* of books, which includes the study of typography, bookbinding, illustration, paper, etc., but is now generally applied to *lists* of books. We cannot get very far without them, and the field is very wide indeed. Since books are published every week, it is impossible for any printed list to be absolutely up to date, but there are many occasions where it is necessary to refer to the latest book on the subject.

The average research worker generally requires a not-too-long list of books of fairly recent date covering one subject. If his local library is an “open access” one, he can refer to the shelves where all the books on one subject are grouped together. In any case, he can look up the subject index of the catalogue. The choice, of course, is limited by the stock held by the library. Some enterprising public librarians compile lists of books on topics of public interest and enjoyment, such as Arts and Crafts, Sports, Biographies of local celebrities, etc. Lists of books on various subjects have been compiled by the National Book Council (3 Henrietta St., W.C.2), from whom a catalogue sheet may be obtained. See also the Catalogue of “A Library of Living Books” sold at the *Sunday Times* Book Exhibition, 1936, etc.

### *Readers' Guides*

Perhaps the most valuable subject catalogue of all is that of the British Museum to which reference has

## *Bibliographies*

already been made. So useful is it that all the more wide-awake local libraries have a copy although they themselves have not a tithe of the books therein mentioned, and to them the Press marks mean little. The only drawback is that the books recorded in the latest edition are at *least* five years old. Ask for it at your library. It will probably be in the head librarian's office.

It is as well to state here and now that we are not always after the latest books. For details of old processes, old opinions, etc., we turn to contemporary books. There may be a modern book published last week which deals with our inquiry, but in original research, we turn to contemporary books.

A useful and classified list of selected books on all subjects is Sonnenschein, W. S., **The Best Books, Five Parts**, London, 1910-31.

An out-of-date, but still useful at times, book is **Standard Books**, 4 vols., 1912-15. (T. Nelson & Sons.)

Another of this nature is Forbes Gray, W., **Books That Count**, 1923.

For books printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and English books printed abroad, between 1475 and 1640, see Pollard, A. W., **Short Title Catalogue**, 1926 (known among librarians as the S.T.C.).

There is also Sawyer, C. J., and Harvey Darton, F. J., **English Books**, which deals with books published between 1475 and 1900.

For the period 1557-1640 we have Arber, E., **Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers**, 5 vols., 1875-1894.

For the section omitted from these Registers, see Gregg, W. W., and Boswell, **Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company, 1576-1602**, from Register "B" (London, 1930).

For the period 1640-1708, we can refer to Eyre, G. E. B., and Plomer, H. H., **Transcript of the Registers**

of the Company of Stationers, 3 vols., privately printed (1913-14).

Part of this period is also covered by Arber, E., *Term Catalogues—1668-1709*, which were published from 1903 to 1906, and contain indexes both of authors and titles.

The period between 1700 and 1800 is rather inadequately covered by what is popularly known as *The London Catalogue*. In 1786, appeared a cumulative volume of this work by W. Bent, a London printer, and entitled *A General Catalogue of Books Printed in Great Britain and Published in London for Year MDCC to MDCCXXXVI*. This had various supplements which carried it to the end of the century.

For the period 1770-1803, we have Reuss, J. D., *Alphabetical Register*, with Supplements, 1791 and 1804.

Lastly we have the *English Catalogue*, published first in 1801, and still in progress. Some of the volumes are by author only. Others contain a combination of subjects and titles arranged in the same alphabet as the authors. The catalogue is now published every February for the year ended the previous December, and is a directory of general publications, Government publications, and those of learned and scientific Societies.

For books issued since the last *English Catalogue* we can consult weekly and monthly cumulated lists in the trade papers such as *The Publishers' Circular* or *The Publisher and Bookseller*. *Whitaker's Cumulative Book List* is published quarterly, each part including all the previous parts for that year. *Current Literature* is a monthly magazine from the same house, and contains a complete *classified* list of books published each month.

For current English books which are in print, there is *The Reference Catalogue of Current Literature*, the last edition of which was published in 1936. It is a collection of publishers' catalogues, with an author and title index, and much other useful information.

### *Bibliographies*

**Subject Index of the London Library**, 2 vols., 1909-23, is a useful reference work, since the library contains a fine collection of standard works in many languages and is therefore a reliable guide to the best authorities.

The Patent Office Library issued bibliographical lists dealing with works on technical matters. These are rather out-of-date, however.

Libraries often issue classified subject lists. As regards old books in the British Museum Reading Room, we have Proctor, R., **Index to the Early Printed Books in the British Museum . . . to 1500. With Notes on those in the Bodleian Library**. There is also an "official" catalogue: **Catalogue of Books Printed in the XVth Century, now in the British Museum** (1908).

### *Bibliographies of Bibliographies*

The lists of the more important of these are given in Esdaile, Arundell, **Student's Manual of Bibliography**.

This book deals with bibliography proper, as well as giving useful bibliographies. It is intended for students of librarianship, but the researcher will find much of interest.

Other works which might be consulted as occasion requires are Watt, R., **Bibliotheca Britannica**, 4 vols., Edinburgh, 1824, Peddie, R. A., **Subject Index to Books Published before 1880** (London, 1933), and Courtney, W. P., **A Register of National Bibliography**, 3 vols. (London, 1905-12). The last-named contains a useful list of references, including periodical publications, and is arranged in one alphabetical series. It is a large, laborious work, and, in spite of its title, is international in outlook. It is kept up to date in MS. in the British Museum Reading Room. Vol. 3 is a supplementary work.

## *Facts and How to Find Them*

The **Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature**, Lowndes, W. T., 10 parts and an Appendix (London, 1857-64), gives a list of rare books confined to English authors. For better-known English and American authors, Lowndes is now superseded by De Ricci, S., **The Book Collector's Guide**, 1921.

The prices given in both books are, of course, now quite irrelevant.

Van Hosen, H. B., and Walter, F. K., **Bibliography . . . an Introductory Manual**, 1928, contains a large list of books of reference, chiefly bibliographies.

### *Bibliographies of English Literature*

Ward, Sir A. W., and Waller, A. R., **The Cambridge History of English Literature**, 1907-27.

Bateson, F. W., **The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature**.

Northup, C. S., **A Register of the Bibliographies of the English Language and Literature**, 1925.

Peddie, R. A., **National Bibliographies, A Descriptive Catalogue**, 1921 (Supplement to **The Library World**).

Strange as it seems, the colossal, and almost impossible task of compiling a world bibliography was actually begun. Theoretically, the work might be done, given a huge staff and much money. Practically, the task is out of the question. The nearest approach to a universal bibliography yet is the general catalogue of the British Museum Reading Room. This is certainly the chief repertory of English books.

### *Scientific Literature*

The best guides are **International Catalogue of Scientific Literature**, 1902-14, and **British Science Guild, Catalogue of British Scientific Books**, 1921.

The above are given only as indications of the type

### *Bibliographies*

of bibliographies available. The object of this book is to serve as a guide or introduction to specialized sources of information. There is no point, even were this book of encyclopedic proportions, in repeating lists of books which have been adequately catalogued elsewhere.

### *Publishers' Catalogues*

Most publishers specialize. Some specialize in technical books, others in business books, books on building, religion, topography, fine arts, etc., and, besides dealing in their own books, act as agents for the leading American and foreign publishers of books of a similar type. Their catalogues (obtainable gratis on application) are invariably well-produced and classified, often with a summary of the contents of each book, and although the range is limited by the books that the publishers have in stock and in print, they nevertheless contain lists of great value. The advertisements in the backs of some books are worth looking over, too.

The catalogues of the big second-hand booksellers are worth getting. Obviously the aim of these catalogues is to *sell* books, not to act as free guides to book-lists. You need have no fear in applying for a copy. Sooner or later you will wish you had a certain volume on your shelves instead of at a distant library, and buy it.

### *Unrecorded Books*

Certain rare books, and many privately printed ones (which do not come within the scope of the Copyright Act by means of which the British Museum obtains its books) escape the notice of bibliographers, and their existence is revealed only when they appear in the auction rooms. To trace these, see **Book Prices Current** (1888 onwards) and **American Book Prices Current** (1895 onwards).

## CHAPTER IV

### *Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, Maps, Gazetteers, Quotations*

THESE form some of the more obvious sources of information, but not everybody uses them to the best advantage.

#### *Encyclopedias*

Before embarking on a course of study on any particular subject, one would do well to read up the matter first in a good encyclopedia, where a broad and "meaty" survey is given, often by renowned experts.

Bibliographies are often given for further reference, whilst there are usually many cross-references to other articles in the book. When one is studying a fairly broad subject such as Art or Electricity, dozens of cross-references will be required, and *the index must be used*. Because articles are arranged alphabetically many people think that an index is not needed. In fact many would be surprised to know that an encyclopedia *has* an index. They might think it a joke like the old chestnut about the savant who wrote an index to the dictionary.

Encyclopedias have not always been divided up alphabetically. The actual word means something like "complete education," and in ancient times, encyclopedias were intended to be read right through. As time went on, and knowledge increased, and also as learning became more specialized, reading (and mastering) an encyclopedia was a very tall order. So, for easy reference, the matter was split up alphabetically.

### *Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, etc.*

This system cuts both ways. The advantage is that if we know a good deal about electricity but only want to refresh our minds about dynamo construction, we look up Dynamo right away, and there is the matter, clean cut. On the other hand, if we know little about electricity and wish to know about dynamos, the matter referred to under this heading will naturally not be fully understood. We may not know about electricity and magnetism, inductance, direct current, alternating current, etc. These will have to be hunted up, and it is best to look first under the general heading of Electricity, both in the encyclopedia and also in the index, and then see what other articles we are to be referred to to complete our survey of electrical matters.

The Children's Encyclopedia is a work which is not alphabetical. Electricity is treated as a whole. By referring to the index we can ascertain where Dynamos are mentioned.

Most encyclopedias give information under the name of the smallest subject, not under the largest theme, but there are important exceptions.

### *Out-of-date Encyclopedias*

Most books are, strictly speaking, out of date before they are published. This particularly applies to books dealing with current affairs. Biographies, etc., are not so affected, but it is inevitable that between the time the writer hands the proofs to the printer and the time when the book is in circulation—a matter of some months—fresh events have occurred. A book may have a short life. If it has a reasonably good sale, neither the writer nor the publishers care. It is easy to revise or rewrite it.

Not so an encyclopedia. For one thing, it is costly, and one looks upon it as an investment. New

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encyclopedias are issued from time to time, but the private buyer does not usually like buying a new one every few years. With public libraries it is different.

Encyclopedias have been issued on the loose-leaf principle, the publishers sending out fresh pages from time to time as important changes occur, but these are not very general, owing, no doubt, to the trouble and cost of continual supplements.

As a rule, encyclopedias do not deal with ephemeral stuff, but rather with things of real value and permanent worth. They do not readily grow out of date. When they do, however, they are useful in ascertaining the state of knowledge at the time when the work was issued. The present writer, for example, had to write an article dealing with Pitch Pine—its uses, properties, etc. It has not always been regarded with the same esteem. An account of it in a mid-nineteenth century encyclopedia varies a good deal from that in a modern one. Timber research chemists have learnt a lot in the meantime, and have caused old views to be revised.

The old views we can learn from old encyclopedias. As a general rule, the research worker dealing with modern subjects had best consult the very latest editions at a public library. It should be mentioned that many great libraries do not encourage mere *reference* work (such as can be undertaken in the excellent reference rooms of local public libraries), but rather *research* work. Encyclopedias are provided on the open-access shelves, but for the very latest editions, one has to apply for the volumes in the usual way. In any case it is not expected that readers will use the open-access encyclopedias for prolonged study. It is unfair to other users. Extra copies are often available if application is made.

There are many kinds of encyclopedias, some general,

### *Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, etc.*

others very specialized, dealing with technical, etc., matters only.

#### *General Encyclopedias*

The most famous, and best of all, is **The Encyclopedia Britannica** (last edition, 7th impression, dated 1936, 24 vols., **Chambers' Encyclopedia**, and **Everyman Encyclopedia**, 12 vols., are also well known.

There are many others. The more "popular" they are, the more likely they are to be full of mistakes. Even the best books have a few errors, and the research worker is likely to perpetuate them, if facts are not checked from other sources.

One should look up several different encyclopedias, as the treatment varies greatly (according to the editors' estimate of the importance of items, and the space available), and all the essential facts of the matter are not necessarily embodied in one particular work.

A really excellent and cheap (2s. 6d.) book is **Pears' Cyclopedia**. This is approaching its 50th edition. It has over a thousand pages, and contains twenty-two sections dealing with such matters as Prominent People, Classical Dictionary, Gazetteer, Events, Cookery, Pets, Health, Sports, etc. If one were allowed to choose one, and only one, reference book to suit all needs, this would be the choice of most. It is not issued annually, but as occasion demands—usually several times a year. It is revised each time it is issued.

#### *Dictionaries*

These are closely allied to encyclopedias. In fact some Classical Dictionaries, for example, are really encyclopedias.

There are literally thousands of dictionaries available, covering definitions of the words used in our own

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language and in foreign languages; bilingual dictionaries; encyclopedic and etymological dictionaries; dictionaries of terms used in engineering, science, commerce, etc. Then there are those which deal with abbreviations, e.g. Rogers, W. T., **Dictionary of Abbreviations** (of terms used in professions, sports, trades and law).

Again there are those dealing with synonyms, e.g. **Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases**. (This is not really a dictionary, although a full index gives it the semblance of one.)

As with year books, etc., the field is so vast that the reader is recommended to find out personally what volumes are likely to be of use. There is more use for a dictionary than as an aid in correct spelling.

Many dictionaries, of a popular nature, have all kinds of delightful and unexpected appendices. The present writer must confess to using a dictionary for several months before he found out that tucked away at the end was a list showing the symbolic significance of flowers and jewels. There was also another list showing what various Christian names are supposed to mean. In various dictionaries one may find lists of foreign phrases, abbreviations, musical terms, pronunciation of proper names, corresponding tables of centigrade and Fahrenheit systems of measurement of temperature, weights and measures, etc.

There are often supplements of words which, whilst not purely slang, have not been officially admitted to the English language—such words as “beano,” “Aussies,” “wangle,” etc.

### *Maps, Gazetteers, etc.*

Since this work aims at being severely practical, the temptation to enthuse over the romance of maps must be curbed. They are handmaidens to practically every

## *Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, etc.*

form of study—geography, history, economics, etc. We can follow a travel book much easier if it has a map, or if we have an atlas. We can appreciate literature the more if we can see on a map exactly whereabouts are the places described.

### GAZETTEERS

These are really indexes to maps, and often give, in a very small nutshell, an account of the population, products, etc., of a town or place. Their chief use is in locating a place. Further details we can read up elsewhere. Naturally only the more important places are mentioned in the general gazetteers. A small village in, say, Sussex would be overlooked. In such a case, if we know the county, or rough location, we can consult a guide-book dealing with the district.

A standard gazetteer is **Bartholomew's Survey Gazetteer of the British Isles, 1927**.

Another source of topographical information, often overlooked, is **Kelly's County Directories**.

### MAPS

The chief producer of maps in this country is a Government department, **The Ordnance Survey**.

The maps are of a very high standard, and issued in all scales. The usual scale for seeing the country in a fair amount of detail is the 1 inch to the mile. This is the one used by walking tourists. There are still larger scales, 6 inches and even 25 inches to the mile, issued, and largely used by estate agents and property owners.

On the other hand there are smaller scales, 4 miles to the inch being a popular one with motorists. The O.S. issue a catalogue which should be applied for by those interested.

Apart from general maps, there are geological maps,

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etc., and also maps (with a booklet of description) of Roman England, Medieval England, etc.

The British Museum has one of the finest collection of maps in the world.

### **ATLASSES**

There are scores of these, of greatly varying size, completeness, price, quality, usefulness, etc. All general encyclopedias have an atlas section, or have maps incorporated with the text. Special atlases have been issued dealing with biblical history, military campaigns, colonial growth, etc. As with dictionaries, many of these atlases reveal unexpected supplements, such as details of flags, coins, the planetary system, etc. An atlas is practically indispensable to the proper understanding of such subjects as history.

### *Quotations, Proverbs, etc.*

It is to be feared that many writers use these books to convey the impression that they are well read and have quoted apt remarks extempore. Be this as it may, such books are useful in not only checking quotations which we are rather hazy about, and in establishing their authorship, but in suggesting suitable expressions for use in speeches, etc.

There are many such books. In proposing to use any particular one, ascertain whether it includes quotations from modern authors, or whether it tells you exactly where the quotation is to be found among an author's works. In many cases you already know the author's name.

The following are some standard books—

Bartlett, J. A., *Familiar Quotations*.

Benham, W. Gurney, *New Book of Quotations*. This is arranged by author, and then by index of subjects and themes.

*Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, etc.*

**Dictionary of Quotations and Proverbs**, Everyman Library. "This dictionary represents the work of many successive compilers, English and American, and the authors it quotes, known and anonymous, are legion. Traditional sayings and the modern currency are both incorporated."

**Stevenson, Burton, Book of Quotations** (1936, 2nd Edition). A fine, big book.

**Hoyt's New Cyclopedia of Practical Quotations** (Funk and Wagnalls Co.).

In addition, there are various dictionaries and concordances of the works of various authors, such as Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Thomas Hardy, etc.

## CHAPTER V

### *Year Books, "Official" Publications, etc.*

IT is difficult to think of any trade, sport, sect, country, interest, etc., which is not covered by a year book or directory issued at frequent intervals. It is quite impossible to do more than indicate the vast field here. Others have compiled lists of year books, directories, etc., among which we may note—

Cannons, H. G. T., *Classified Guide to 1700 Annuals, Directories and Year Books* (Grafton & Co.).

*Reference Books*, John Minto. (Published for the Library Association.) This is an English book.

*Guide to Reference Books*, J. G. Mudge. An American book, though international in outlook. It was compiled by the Reference Librarian of Columbia University, and kept up to date year by year in the *Library Journal*.

Nothing will save so much time as a thorough acquaintance with the year books, etc., covering one's subject, *and an idea of their contents*. A casual reader might overlook certain of the contents, and spend hours searching elsewhere. No one reference book can comprise everything. There is a physical limit to what one can cram into a printed book.

The supreme year book of all is *Whitaker's Almanack*, which contains "an account of astronomical and other phenomena, and a vast amount of information respecting the Government, finances, population, commerce, and general statistics of the various nations of the world, with an index containing 30,000 references." The cheap, paper-covered edition contains just over 700 pages, and costs 3s., whilst the "complete" edition in cloth boards costs 6s.

Idly turning over the leaves, one comes across The Roman Calendar, The Provinces of India, The Peerage, Government and Public Offices, The Royal Navy, The Universities, Societies and Institutions, Annual Premiums for Whole Life Assurance, Infant Mortality in various countries, World Trade, Post Office Guide, Railways, Scottish County Officials, Floods, British Health Resorts, Members of Parliament and Ministers (with their salaries), Drama, Films, Broadcasting, Racing Fixtures, Hall Marks on Plate, Professional Fees, hosts of facts, figures, addresses. No other book contains the proportionate amount of information, and a *current* copy, of course, is essential.

The *Daily Mail Year Book* is a handy reference book which costs only a shilling. It does not attempt to copy Whitaker's, but specializes in short articles summing up recent progress in various fields such as National Defence, British Railways, Lawn Tennis, etc., apart from general facts and figures. A useful feature is a thousand short biographies of present-day people often in the news. The articles, naturally, are flavoured with the policy of the *Daily Mail* with which you may, or may not, agree.

An American "Whitaker" is *The World Almanac and Encyclopedia and Book of Facts*, published by the *New York World-Telegram*.

*Hazell's Almanac* was once a rival to Whitaker, but is no longer issued. One can bear it in mind, however, when looking up events of past years.

For Local Government affairs, a valuable guide is the *Municipal Year Book*. This tells what each local authority has done in the past year as regards open spaces, water supply, roads, etc., and what it proposes doing in the future.

For National, Imperial, and Foreign information, we have *The Statesman's Year Book*, which contains

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useful maps, and also lists of official and unofficial publications dealing with each country.

The **Europa Service**—in two volumes—is a European Who's Who in politics, trade, art, literature, science, etc., and encyclopedia of European affairs (economic and social conditions). It is also a directory of the League of Nations, international Societies, etc.

**Almanac de Gotha** deals with diplomatic and political matters, Royalty and nobility.

Most countries issue their year books. A random glance at a well-stocked library shelf devoted to such matters reveals **Austrian Year Book**, **South American Year Book**, **Year Book of the Czechoslovak Republic**, **Swedish Year Book**, **Indian Year Book** and **Who's Who?** **Chinese Year Book** (in English), **South American Year Book**, **Anglo-American Year Book**, etc.

**Kelly's Directories** are also mines of information and are far more than just lists of names and addresses. The county guides contain, besides information proper to such a work, particulars of local history, topography, crops, churches, their livings, etc. The big towns have their own fine directories, whilst London boroughs have separate, smaller ones.

There are fine directories issued to cover various trades, e.g. **The Building Trades Directory**, **The Cabinet Making, Furnishing and Upholstery Trades Directory**. **Kelly's Directory of Merchants, Manufacturers and Shippers** gives much useful gazetteer information as well as a glossary of trade terms, trade marks, etc.

**Telephone Directories** will be found in many libraries which cannot afford to cover the whole country with detailed directories, and they are very useful for checking addresses. **The Buff Book** is a classified commercial directory. The telephone directories have the advantage of appearing every six months instead of every

*Year Books, "Official" Publications, etc.*

three years or so compared with other directories. This makes them right up to date.

The Post Office Directory is another very useful reference book.

*Official Publications*

Extremely valuable information is to be found in the publications of His Majesty's Stationery Office, and other official printers. Most people regard these publications as deadly dull, suitable only for stodgy statisticians and economists. A visit to the Sales Office at Kingsway, London, will give the lie to this, even if we do no more than look at the covers of the booklets, which employ the best typographical skill and devices, and are often illustrated. We shall see, too, that the books do not deal only with "official" and weighty matters of government. There are books on gardening, goldfish, careers, etc.

As one "blue book" itself says, "The Government should set the highest standard practicable in the various classes of its own productions, and so help improve the public taste." Old-time official publications might have been dull, but no longer can we agree with Dickens's sentiments when he wrote "Although Mr. Gradgrind did not take after Blue Beard, his room was quite a blue chamber with its abundance of blue books."

The commercial side of publication does not worry the S.O. much, and however much this aspect may be open to debate, there is no doubt that it reacts favourably upon the researcher, who is enabled to buy the publications at reasonable prices. If the S.O. publications are now ever open to the charge of being "stodgy" it is only because the information is well compressed.

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### STATIONERY OFFICE PUBLICATIONS

These (as have just been described) are non-parliamentary publications. The various Government departments, such as the India Office, Royal Mint, Ministry of Health, Forestry Commission, etc., all issue reports, which the S.O. publishes. A free monthly list (*Monthly Circular of New Publications, 1919*—) is available to all who apply, but with such a great number of publications, some index is necessary. This is provided by the **Guide to Current Official Statistics**, issued annually at a shilling. To quote from the introduction, the “aim of the Guide is—

(1) to direct the inquirer to *all* current official publications that contain statistics bearing on his subject; and, more especially,

(2) to inform him of the nature of the statistics he will find in the volumes to which he is referred, i.e. their mode of analysis, and the time and place to which they relate.”

An idle glance over the pages reveals the many and diverse references—Aliens, Coal Mining, Crops, Evening Schools, Industrial Fatigue, Hawkers, Hay, Herrings, Milk, Murder, Oil Seeds, Pigs, Playing Cards, Prerogative of Mercy, Radium, Small Pox, Smuggling, Solicitors, Special Constables, Spirits, Wool and Wrecks. Instructions are given as to how to use the book to the best advantage.

Mention must be made of **The Ministry of Labour Gazette** (6d. monthly). This gives all the latest figures relating to trade and employment, and is of special interest to students of present-day economic conditions.

Apart from the free monthly lists just mentioned, the S.O. has, since 1922, published yearly a **Consolidated List of Government Publications**, whilst **The Brief Guide to Government Publications** (H.M.S.O., 1925) is useful.

### GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

These cover various reports of Commissions, etc., and they are numbered. In this connection three publications may be mentioned—

Lees Smith, H. B. **A Guide to Parliamentary and Official Papers**, 1924.

Horrocks, S. **Government Publications**, 1930.

Jones, Hilda V., **Catalogue of Parliamentary Papers, 1801-1900** (with a few earlier ones), London, 1904 (various decennial supplements).

Select Blue Books, etc., are announced in *The Times Literary Supplement*.

### PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT

The **Journal of the House of Commons** has been published from 1547, and the **Journal of the House of Lords** from 1509.

Cobbett, **Parliamentary History of England**, 36 vols., London, 1806-20, covers the earliest period down to 1803, and is continued in **The Parliamentary Debates** (London), 1812, to present date. (This is commonly called **Hansard** from the name of the printer—Luke Hansard.)

These publications contain an immense amount of facts about various phases of Government, and have ample indexes, both cumulative and otherwise.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAPERS

The London County Council publish many valuable papers, and these can be obtained from Messrs. P. S. King & Son, Great Smith Street, Westminster. Other big cities such as Birmingham and Manchester do so too, but many smaller authorities cannot afford to do so, and have a few typewritten copies made instead. You will nearly always find one at the local public library, and certainly at the local Town Hall, or

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equivalent office. Whenever there is any difficulty in getting facts, a Councillor should be approached (see "Personal Inquiries," Chapter IX).

### *Archaeological, etc., Papers*

There is an immense number of these.

A useful book is Gomme, C. L., **Index to Archaeological Papers, 1665-1914**, since when the ground has been covered by the **Library Association Index**.

### *Papers of Learned Societies*

There are also immense numbers of these, and it is a difficult field to tackle. Often when the paper is tracked down it is far too "advanced" for a layman to understand. These papers, read to a select audience and not, in general, intended for the whole world, epitomize a man's lifetime of experience in a specialized field. The papers present difficulty to cataloguers sometimes, and if they are not easily found in the catalogue, expert help should be asked. As a general rule "Academies," as these societies are called, are listed under the towns wherein they are situate. (See "Catalogues," Chapter II, showing how societies' papers are listed.)

With a *subject* catalogue, we shall not have to worry about what societies to refer to, but otherwise we must select whatever society we judge will be most likely to concern itself with what we are looking for. For example, the Institution of Mechanical Engineers would not publish papers on Scottish history, whilst the Caledonian Society would not publish a paper on the Prevention of Vibration. What learned societies will help us?

There is a short list in **Whitaker and Europa Service**, and **The Official Year Book of the Scientific and Learned Societies of Great Britain and Ireland** gives a record of publications issued during the previous session.

*Year Books, "Official" Publications, etc.*

The League of Nations (which, of course, issues valuable papers, reports, books, periodicals, etc.) publishes a **Handbook of International Organizations**, and the Royal Society of London has a **Catalogue of Scientific Papers, 1800-1900**.

There are about 3000 societies and institutions in London alone.

For the British Empire generally we have the **Overseas Official Publications, 1927**, issued by the Royal Empire Society.

Before that date, we can search the Society's big general catalogue. The Imperial Institute, the Colonial Office, and the Crown Agents for the Colonies all ought to have files of the relevant papers.

## CHAPTER VI

### *Biography and Dates*

IT is not for us here to expiate upon the merits of biography. Whether people make history or history makes people may well remain a subject for debate. The fact is that we are constantly having to refer to biographies to find out who people are, or were, what they have done, are trying to do, etc. We may even be writing a full-length biography ourselves.

#### *Published Biographies*

If we wish to find out much about a certain person, we should ascertain whether his or her biography has been published. Biographies vary much in treatment. They may be a plain chronicle of events, with a few impartial comments. The book may deal mainly with the subject's influence on certain matters, or connexion with certain people. The book may set out either to "debunk" a popular character, or to vindicate another. One has to reckon on the biographer's bias (not necessarily a bad thing). Some characters such as King Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth, King Charles II, Queen Victoria, etc., have been rather overdone. On the other hand, biographies have been written around lesser men—country squires, missionaries, eccentrics, thieves, etc. Therefore do not think that only the "big" names have been written about.

Biographies often contain much more than personal matters. It is usual to give a survey of general conditions of the period in which the subject lived and the circle he or she moved in. For example, biographies of eighteenth century M.P.'s might give us details of Parliamentary procedure of the time.

### *Biography and Dates*

The **Dictionary of National Biography** (D.N.B. for short) contains authoritative biographies of all important English people (and Americans of the Colonial period), the length being in proportion to their estimated importance. After the various accounts appear details as to the person's own works, reference to other sources and details as to where portraits may be found. Living people are not included.

With three supplements, the work is brought up to 1921 (seventy-three volumes in all). For home use, a single volume **Index and Epitome** consisting of condensed biographies is available. All libraries worthy of their name keep this.

**Boase, Frederick, Modern English Biography**, 6 vols. (1892-1921) is a useful supplement to the D.N.B. It includes thousands of lesser-known people who have died since 1850.

**Who's Who** is the well-known annual dealing in a nutshell with outstanding contemporary Englishmen and a few distinguished foreigners. It gives details of their address, clubs, recreations, works, career, etc.

**Who Was Who** is a useful link between the D.N.B. and the current *Who's Who*. There is also a **Catholic Who's Who** and other specialized biographies.

### *Foreign and Overseas Biography*

Corresponding to the English *Who's Who*, we have such works as—

**Qui Etes Vous?**

**Wer ist's.**

**Who's Who in America.**

**Who's Who in China.**

**Thom's Irish Who's Who.**

**Who's Who in Canada.**

**Who's Who in New Zealand.**

**Who's Who in Australia.**

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**Who's Who in New York.**

**Woman's Who's Who in America.**

The above are only quoted as examples. There are dozens of others. Inquire of the librarian which are stocked. Do not overlook the second volume of the *Europa Service*.

### *The Aristocracy, etc.*

There are several publications, among which might be mentioned **Burke's Peerage, Baronetage, Knightage, etc., Debrett's Peerage, Baronetage, Knightage, etc.** (various volumes), **Dod's Peerage, and Whitaker's Peerage.**

### *Trades and Professions*

There must be hundreds of these. The best plan is to ask the librarian (or ascertain from current literature reference books) what books exist. There are biographies of sportsmen, architects, government officials, etc. The following are given, as usual, for the sake of illustration—

**Who's Who in the Theatre.**

**Who's Who in Literature.**

**Crockford's Clerical Directory.**

**The Medical Directory.**

**Baptist Year Book.**

**Who's Who in Art.**

**Law List.**

**Stock Exchange Year Book.**

**Banker's Almanac and Year Book.**

**Congregational Year Book.**

### *Characters in Fiction*

It is often desired to find out who, for example, *Becky Sharp* was, who created her, and in what book.

## *Biography and Dates*

One such work is Walsh, Wm. S., **Heroes and Heroines of Fiction** (1914).

### *Various*

There is room for one comprehensive set of volumes covering the whole of biography. At present we have to look in several places before we find what we want. Perhaps the field is too vast for one work to cover. The following are a few standard books, not previously mentioned—

Hyamson, A. D., **Dictionary of Universal Biography**, 1916. This gives names of thousands of persons not named elsewhere, stating who he or she was and birth date and death date—all in one line per person.

**Chambers' Biographical Dictionary**, 1926, is comprehensive, but not very detailed.

**Lippincott's Pronouncing Dictionary of Biography and Mythology** is an American book, but is international in scope.

**The Century Encyclopedia of Names**—in geography, biography, mythology, history, ethnology, art, architecture, fiction, etc.—is another, and there is nothing quite like this book. The appendices include chronological and genealogical tables.

All encyclopedias of a general nature, and a good many year books, include biographical information. The **Daily Mail Year Book**, for example, has a section of such notes.

### *Dates*

As a general rule, it is much quicker to resort to standard historical and biographical works to ascertain dates than to look up the matter in various dictionaries of dates with their thousands of entries. These dictionaries are very useful if one wishes to find out, for example, all the important events of 1872, or what

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centenaries happen to be due. On the other hand, if one wishes to know when Oliver Cromwell was born, it is usually better to look up a standard biography.

**Haydn's Dictionary of Dates and Universal Information** (1910) covers most important events, and a valuable feature is classified lists of such events as abdications, assassinations, conspiracies, planets, Lord Mayors, bishops, etc., and chronological summaries of the leading events of the histories of all nations.

**Nelson's Dictionary of Dates** is another useful book.

In the **Dictionary of Dates** (Everyman's Library) "the aim . . . has been to give every date likely to be of service to the general reader while getting rid of the superfluities which make the typical date book too bulky for easy use." The present edition covers events up to 1923.

**Little, C. E., Cyclopedias of Classified Dates** (1900), gives the dates first by country and then chronologically, each period being divided into classified sections such as Army, Navy, Arts, Science, etc. There are detailed indexes. It is an American book, now unfortunately out of print and difficult to obtain. It is one of the most detailed and general, however, and the larger libraries may have it.

**Year Books.** Some, such as Whitaker, give a review of the events of the previous year.

A book which combines a Who's Who with a year book and desk book is **The Authors' and Writers' Who's Who**, Shaw Publishing Co. This firm also issue a number of specialized biographies.

Other references are **Dictionary of Biographical Reference**, Phillips L. B. (100,000 names), and **Men of the Time**, Thompson Cooper.

## CHAPTER VII

### *Periodical Publications*

THE number of periodical publications produced in this country alone is staggering. It is safe to say that there is no trade, profession, shade of opinion, etc., which has not at least one journal to cover it. Some, such as four-page leaflets describing the common round of a country parish church, are of so little importance to the world in general that we can ignore them.

Others, important in their restricted spheres, are often too obscure to be worth the trouble of locating. Others, however, have important circulations, reflect contemporary opinion and methods, and contain items of information a long time before they appear in book form—if at all.

Some useful books containing lists of periodical publications are—

**Willing's Press Guide** (annually). First published 1874. This contains a list of about 7000 names, giving details of the publication day, price, address of publisher, etc., in alphabetical order. A very valuable feature is an Index to Class Papers, where we can find out, for example, the periodicals dealing with Bee Keeping, Church of Scotland, Dentistry, Fish Trade, Waste Trades, Zoology, etc. Another list shows the periodicals published from each town. Altogether a useful book which will repay careful examination of its contents.

**The Writers' and Artists' Year Book** is another annual which few journalists are without. This lists the principal English, American, and Colonial journals in alphabetical order, but makes no claim of being a

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complete list. Only those journals offering any scope for the professional writer are listed, so that the smaller fry of papers, or those which do not accept outside material, are omitted. Unlike Willing's book, it gives a very clear idea of the type of contents one may expect to find in each paper. There is a classified index of papers and magazines, but this is not so detailed as *Willing's Guide*. The point is that Willing's caters more for the newsagents and advertisers. The *Writers' and Artists' Year Book* contains useful lists of publishers, Press cutting agencies, photograph agencies, etc. All research workers should know the contents of this book inside out, especially if they propose writing up and selling their information.

Another book is *Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory*. A study of these Press directories will therefore show that there is a multitude of periodicals on every possible subject, each issue being full of information. Some of it may be very dull, stodgy and correct. Some may be "popular" and of doubtful accuracy. Some may be propagandist and otherwise coloured or distorted. But, anyway, it is all grist for the mill of the researcher. A rich field—but a very troublesome one, to be used generally as a last resource.

Yet periodicals are important especially in ascertaining contemporary opinion. Books written after the event must needs view things from a different standpoint, and in a detached and leisurely way denied to the participants in the actual events recorded. Again, some information is of such limited local interest that it is never recorded in books.

The question of Press cuttings is dealt with elsewhere in this book.

### *Indexes to Periodicals*

Without an index, the finding of any particular

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article in a pile of periodicals is worse than looking for a needle in a haystack. Unfortunately indexing periodicals has been done only sporadically.

Let us examine available indexes in their chronological order. For periodicals before 1800, the best general list, especially useful for foreign periodicals, is the great Reuss, J. D., *Repertorium*, 16 vols., which contains a mass of material classified into sections such as Chemistry, Astronomy, Mathematics, Technology, etc.

From 1802, we have Poole, W. F., *Index to Periodical Literature* (1802-96).

This was followed by *The Annual Library Index* (1905-10), which in turn was taken over by *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, published by the H. W. Wilson Co. These are indexes to periodicals usually taken by American libraries. There are monthly indexes cumulated at quarterly and again at yearly intervals.

Other Wilson books index further periodical publications such as—

*Reader's Guide, Supplement, International Index to Periodicals, Annual Magazine Subject Index*, and others of more specialized scope, such as—

*Agricultural Index, Industrial Arts Index, Index to Legal Periodicals, and Dramatic Index* (Faxon).

Whilst we are dealing with American libraries, we might mention American Library Association, *Index to General Literature* (1900, with Supplement 1910). This is a subject index to collections of essays, monographs, important parts of books, chapters, etc.

*Essay and General Literature Index*, 1900-33, edited by Minnie E. Shears and Marian Shaw, is an index to about 40,000 essays and articles in 2144 volumes of collections of essays and miscellaneous works. This is a "dictionary" index, and includes all author entries,

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subject entries, and title entries which have been considered necessary. The material under an author's name is arranged—

- (1) Author's works.
- (2) Works about the author.
- (3) Criticism of an individual work by the author.

This book deals only with books published since 1900, but since then there have been published many collections containing standard essays written a long time before that date.

There is also *The International Index*—devoted chiefly to the Humanities and Science.

### *English Periodicals*

Since 1915, an annual *Subject Index to Periodicals* has been issued by the Library Association (London). It is the work of voluntary contributors, and, of course, does not tackle every journal, but only a selection of them deemed worthy, and whose contents are thought to be authoritative and reliable. Ephemeral and trashy articles from "popular" papers do not therefore jostle carefully written articles by experts.

### *Newspapers*

The precise dividing line between a periodical publication and a newspaper is one which bothers most librarians. If we are using the British Museum Library, we shall find that *Newspapers* are now housed at Colindale—a good way from Bloomsbury.

The only English newspaper that has ever been indexed (or whose index has been made public—since all newspapers index their contents for private information and records) is *The Times*. Whatever we may think of its policy or make-up, *The Times* has been regarded as the nearest approach to an "official" newspaper we have. Although (in the writer's opinion) it is occasion-

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ally pompously wrong, it never panders to "stunts," sensation, scandal, scares, or other stock-in-trade of less responsible papers. An official index to *The Times* began in 1906, and is in progress. It is very full, containing references to date, page, and column. Not quite so detailed, but useful, especially for the period before 1906, is Palmer's Index to "The Times," issued quarterly, from 1791.

For those whose work necessitates constant reference to current affairs, such as those studying politics, etc., Keesing's **Contemporary Archives** is indispensable. Many public libraries take it. It is a sort of diary of current affairs, the news of the day being summarized and sent to subscribers who file it in a special binder. Cumulative indexes are a valuable feature of this work. With Keesing's and *The Times* indexes, the student of affairs should be able to trace any item of important news in a very short time.

The **Annual Register**, which deals with events of the past year, has been published annually since 1758.

**Tercentenary Handlist of English and Welsh Newspapers, Magazines and Reviews**, *The Times*, 1920, is useful for ascertaining what periodicals were published at a given period.

Another helpful work is Crane, R. S., and Kaye, F. B., **A Census of British Newspapers and Periodicals (1620-1800)**.

### *Finding the Files in a Library*

As a minimum, most libraries file *The Times* and the local "rag." The bigger the library, the more periodicals are filed. Some of the periodicals in the library are filed, some sold after use (see "Press Cuttings," p. 60), some sent to local institutions, and others to the waste-paper merchant. The larger, most important, libraries bind up all the journals, and have a full-time

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staff of binders at work. The Patent Office Library has a splendid collection of scientific and trade papers. The issues for the last six months or so are kept loosely in box files on reference shelves. They are then tied in bundles and kept in reserve until the binders can deal with them. Then they are sent to their final positions on the upper floors. There is an extensive card-index to Periodical Publications, which gives the location of various volumes.

In the British Museum Reading Room catalogues, periodicals are listed under "Periodical Publications." There are several volumes, and it is important to note that the various periodicals appear under the name of the town from which they were first issued. The *Irish Times*, for example, would appear under *Dublin*. To ascertain what town the periodicals originally came from, consult the index volumes.

Odd volumes which might here be mentioned are Cotgreave, Alfred, **A Contents-Subject Index to General and Periodical Literature**, 1900, Pollard, A. W., and Smith, W. A., **World List of Scientific Periodicals**, 1900-21, and Ulrich, C. F., **The Periodicals Directory** (1935), "a classified guide to a selected list of current periodicals foreign and domestic to the United States."

### *Press Cuttings*

Modern periodicals are so cheap and plentiful that there is no point in making notes from them. It is quicker and better to snip out the relevant paragraph or article, and file it for future reference. It is really surprising how the information accumulates, and the majority of working journalists, especially the freelances, owe their success to an extensive cuttings-file (plus, of course, the knowledge of how to use it).

There are several Press-cutting agencies who cover any chosen subject very thoroughly, and charge so much

per thousand cuttings. The addresses of these people can be ascertained from a literary year book such as Black's **Writers' and Artists' Year Book**. They are particularly valuable if you want *all* the news about something or somebody (all the reviews of your last book, for example). It is obvious that it is very difficult, if scarcely possible, for the average person to look through every periodical published in England (and important foreign ones), *every* day. This can be done only by a large organization with a trained staff.

Again, one only pays for the cuttings one receives, and if one's subject is not mentioned in the papers for several weeks, one does not have to pay for unrequired copies. This means that it is sometimes cheaper to subscribe to an agency, since the cost of the papers one buys (often in vain) will come to more than the cost of the agency fee.

But this only applies to cases where it is essential that one has all the available Press notices relating to one subject. As a general rule, one is interested in a few subjects in a general way and it is then far cheaper to make one's own Press cuttings. In any case, whether the cuttings are supplied by an agency or by oneself, they must be filed properly. A drawer full of miscellaneous cuttings is not much use. A great many people make cuttings, and stuff them casually into wallets, etc., affirming that they will wait until they can afford a nice cabinet or cuttings-book to store them, and then make a nice job of it. The result is that before they can get a suitable cabinet, they have such a jumble of unsorted cuttings that the task of classifying them seems so formidable that the project is abandoned.

On the other hand, it is almost as bad to start off with a big cabinet and the idea of filling it up as quickly as one can. By all means add to it, but add with discrimination. Ask, of every cutting, "Are you neces-

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sary?" It is not the *bulk* of the file or cuttings-book that matters, but what *information* it contains. Of course, you will not shirk the task of filing really valuable information. This takes time, and a certain evening each week should be devoted to the task, otherwise a huge pile of papers will accumulate. The work is mainly mechanical, and may well be attempted when the brain is tired with creative work. Whilst the brain is thus lying fallow, fresh ideas come.

Before you snip your first cutting make up your mind what subjects you are going to cover. The wider your field, the less thoroughly you will be able to cover it. Specialization pays. Even the simplest single topic can be split into dozens of sub-headings and aspects, as will shortly be demonstrated.

Again, decide what system of filing you are going to use. You will have all your allotted time devoted to filing new cuttings, and little time to waste re-arranging cuttings which might have been sorted out better years ago. Naturally, as one goes on, one discovers better ways of filing, cross-indexing, etc., but a general system should be established.

As a general rule, there is little to recommend the rigid cuttings-book. For one thing, it is bulky. It requires an index. It is cluttered with cuttings not now required—cuttings which have been superseded by others covering the ground better. The only workable system is the envelope file.

For many years the writer used 6 in.  $\times$  9 in. envelopes cut in half, and arranged in cardboard boot-boxes. Some workers prefer larger envelopes stored in vertical files. These are an advantage in some ways, especially as one does not have to fold up the cuttings. On the other hand, small cuttings are liable to get lost in large envelopes, and most of us have not, at first, the necessary file. The boot-box file can be started by

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anyone, and, when funds permit, a wooden cabinet invested in.

The most obvious way of cutting the newspaper to pieces is to use scissors, but it is far quicker and neater to lay a thick piece of millboard under the sheet and make four slick cuts with a penknife or one of those knives which take razor blades. On the back of the cutting mark the date and the name of the paper from which it was taken.

For the sake of demonstration, suppose you are interested in four subjects: Dogs, Child Welfare, South Africa, Whaling.

You will start off with four envelopes marked with these titles, and in them place all the cuttings relating to the subjects. (If you have to fold the cutting, fold it with the title side *outwards*. One instinctively does the reverse.) After a while, the envelopes will be getting very bulky. It is time to subdivide further. Let us look at the doggy cuttings. We could sort them into envelopes bearing the new titles—

DOGS: VARIOUS BREEDS.

DOGS: HEALTH.

DOGS: AMUSING TALES OF.

DOGS: FAMOUS, IN LITERATURE.

The Whaling cuttings might be subdivided—

WHALING: NORWEGIAN.

WHALING: EXTINCTION OF WHALES.

WHALING: WORLD TRADE.

WHALING: BY-PRODUCTS.

So we will go on until *these* envelopes are fairly full. Let us look through the first one, "DOGS, VARIOUS BREEDS." We could probably subdivide this into—

DOGS: Terriers.

DOGS: Alsatians.

DOGS: Mongrels, etc.

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And when the "Terriers" envelope becomes full we can further subdivide it, so that in course of time, when we have thousands of cuttings, we can soon pick out an envelope relating, say, to mongrels who have become "film stars." We shall not have to turn out a bulging envelope simply labelled "Dogs" and spend an hour in sorting its contents in the vague hope that we *may* have a cutting relating to the matter. We could not have provided all these subdivisions at first, as for one thing we did not know what trend the file would take, and if we did, the collection of empty envelopes would be confusing and depressing.

The envelopes themselves must be arranged in convenient groups, and this is easily done by inserting tabbed markers of thick cardboard. One might even keep a special tray for "Dog" matters, and have markers inscribed "BREEDS, HEALTH," etc.

A snag which one soon meets is when a cutting refers to two or more subjects and one does not know what envelope to place it in. Taking our four examples again, we might have a cutting relating to Child Welfare in South Africa, or Children and Dogs. The present writer's plan is to cut up slips of cardboard, about the size of visiting cards, and write on one, say, "SOUTH AFRICA, See Child Welfare in Other Countries." This slip is then placed in an envelope marked "SOUTH AFRICA, Various References to," whilst the cutting itself is placed in "CHILD WELFARE, in Other Countries."

Often a cutting requires more than one cross-reference. Quite frequently we find a cutting which summarizes the contents of several we already have. These can therefore be scrapped. Again, it is often possible to write the whole import of several cuttings in a dozen or so words on a slip of paper. Whilst always adding to the file, be always weeding out too. Several

cuttings might be found in one envelope which relate to each other, but are not sufficiently numerous to warrant a fresh envelope. These should be pinned together.

*“Letters to the Editor”*

There are few journals which do not carry this valuable feature. An interesting psychological study could be made as to why people write to editors. Very often it is for the free publicity which can thus be obtained for worthy causes, or a public pulpit for those who have something worth saying (or something which certain editors think will start a mild literary dog-fight, and so cause rival camps to rush to buy the paper to see how things fare). Then there are people who divulge curious and apparently irrelevant information such as that they went to school with a companion who had fourteen Christian names. There are the “Is this a record?” folk. Many people simply love to see their letters and names in print, and delight to find that they have provoked a discussion. Replies come from unexpected quarters—from people who know amazingly out-of-the-way things, and who would probably never have divulged them otherwise.

The garnering of this information is dealt with in the recent paragraphs on Press Cuttings, but the researcher, instead of gathering any general information from this quarter, may like to pose a question on a particular topic, and await replies. The paper to which the query is submitted should receive careful consideration. Some papers are very “low-brow,” others the reverse. Some prefer only erudite matters. Others are “popular.” Some “letters” are, in effect, authoritative but unpaid articles on learned matters from important people. Unless your problem is of interest to others, it may not be accepted for publication. The shorter, and the more to the point it is, the better.

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Never be afraid to state that you are writing a book on the matter. Few days go by without requests such as the following appearing in certain papers.

I am collecting material for writing the biography of Watts E. Dunne, the eighteenth century eccentric. I should be grateful if anyone having any hitherto unpublished papers, letters, etc., bearing on the matter would kindly let me peruse the same . . . etc.

This often brings invitations to visit private libraries, and also letters from utter strangers, crammed with useful information.

You also get this sort of thing—

I have been informed that Dedleigh Drigh the poet once wrote an ode condemning German sausages. I cannot find this in any collection of this writer's works. Can anyone inform me where it may be found ? It begins like this . . .

If you are lucky, you will have people from Boston, Billericay, Barnes, and Bournemouth rushing to inform you.

### *“Notes and Queries”*

This is a weekly paper which inserts literary, historical, and antiquarian (but not scientific) queries, free of charge, but confines them to those which cannot be answered from the usual reference books. Replies are expected to embody some research. They are unpaid, but one suspects the writers get a thrill of pride at the evidence of their superior knowledge when it is printed. Before inserting the query, one should look up the indexes of back numbers to ascertain whether the query has already been dealt with. Should the query not have been dealt with before, one should be prepared to wait some time before the letter is printed and the information (if any) trickles through. If this

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medium is used, it is as well to lay one's plans well in advance.

### *Newspaper Information Bureaux*

To create and maintain a faithful circle of readers, most newspapers and magazines encourage readers to write to their various departments for information and advice. In a large number of cases the readers could have found the information desired in the usual reference books, and are answered from such. Often the inquiries ask *advice*, and, although this is based on information, it is an aspect which does not concern this present book. It will be found that the replies are usually of a brief and general nature. The writer is probably a working journalist, and does not fancy imparting specialized knowledge gratis to an unknown correspondent (who may be his business rival).

This, however, is a source of information which should not be forgotten. Newspaper librarians are often obliging, and, in any case, are creating goodwill for their paper. They will usually tell you if articles on certain subjects have appeared recently in the columns of their paper.

### *Looking up Old Files*

Many leading newspapers make a regular practice of letting research workers study the files, and a small fee is often asked, depending on how far back one wants to look, and sometimes on the time spent on research. The files for the last few months are generally available free and obtainable without formality. For the older files it is as well to notify the librarian in advance so that the heavy file can be brought up from the store rooms. Most public libraries keep files of *The Times* (as already stated), and if one has much research to do, it is best to apply to the British Museum

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Newspaper Library at Colindale. It should be noted, however, that although the most important journals are bound as soon as possible, it must be some weeks before a file is made up, and unbound newspapers cannot be consulted unless one can show that the matter is very important.

The smaller journals usually have no formal regulations for consulting their files, but if the files cannot be seen in any library, a letter should be addressed to the secretary of the journal concerned. In the great majority of cases one is made welcome, and given all facilities for genuine research.

The Patent Office Library has a great collection of scientific papers and magazines. The Science Library of South Kensington has many files of similar publications.

Do not forget, however, to ascertain what periodicals the local library binds up. As stated previously, instead of having to make a journey to a great library and so adding to the congestion there, one may find what one wants under one's very nose.

### *Trade Papers*

These often have expert advice departments, but the service is confined, as a rule, to regular subscribers, which is only fair, and in any case many such papers are sold by subscription only.

Other papers may charge a small fixed fee for private information, such as valuation and opinion on antiques, wireless lay-outs, domestic heating, etc.—questions which are answered individually, and not of general interest, but which take up an expert's time, and draw upon his hard-won experience.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *Using the Books : Note-taking*

HAVING found a certain number of books dealing with our subject, our task has only just begun. All this bibliographical searching was just a preliminary; a means to an end, not an end in itself. We must learn how to use the books.

At the outset, let it be said that it is well to get into the habit of never using a book more than once in the same inquiry. It amounts to a sort of fidgetiness.

#### *Taking Notes*

It is a vexed question among research workers as to how far notes should be taken. Some maintain that the memory should be relied upon more. A writer known to the present author would, when he had to write an article on a certain subject not well known to him, retire to a library, and read up the subject from several sources. He made no notes, except, perhaps for a few dates, figures and spelling of foreign names. He then returned to his study and wrote the article from what he had remembered. Only the outstanding events were remembered, and these were the points that mattered.

This is all very well if one has a good memory, and can write up the article soon afterwards. A great many research workers, however, gather thousands of facts before they make serious attempts to classify them and write their article or book. Notes are therefore a necessity. What is written, remains. The memory may fail one. Moreover, it is easy to arrange facts written on small pieces of paper into various divisions. It is not

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so easy to marshal one's thoughts when the brain may be teeming with other irrelevant things.

In view of the fact that note-taking is hard work, the ideal is to jot down as much information in as few words as possible. At the same time, ultra brevity is to be avoided, as otherwise when one comes to examine the notes, one may find an abbreviation which seemed very ingenious and time-saving at the moment, but whose meaning is now quite forgotten.

There are various systems of "speed-writing" and abbreviated writing advertised in literary journals, but the present writer has never used them. Likewise, the writer does not use shorthand. The reader can, if need be, invent a few simple abbreviations for his own use. A well-known one is to refer to the main topic by its capital letter only. Thus if you are taking notes on Plumbago, you would write it in full the first time, and subsequently refer to "Exports of P." or "Chief P. producing countries." "The" can nearly always be omitted or written "t." The present writer substitutes "g" for "ing" and would write "h.racg" for "horse racing." Such abbreviations as "tn" for "town," "ch" for "church," etc., are well known.

These short cuts, though they do save a little time, are comparatively unimportant. True economy is effected by a careful choice of what one does write. Upon examination of practically all prose—not merely long-winded verbiage, but even polished writings—the writer, in order to emphasize his point, has multiplied examples and instances. You do not want these extra illustrations. You want the essential point. Once this point is grasped, there is no need for the help of the illustrations. What is more, you want this point in your own words; how it appeals to you; what reference it has to your inquiry.

The best thing to do, then, is to read through a

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chapter or section of a book (not a mere paragraph), and then write down, in your own words, a summary of what you have read. Glance back to see that you have missed nothing of importance. Have you grasped the point? In any case, what are you reading the book for? Don't forget that you are a thinker, not a sponge. As you come to read the notes afterwards, ask yourself "Are the facts correct?" "Up-to-date?" "Biased?" "Mere opinions?" "Only 'good enough'?"

Notes should obviously be legible. All proper names should be written in block capitals and particular care given to figures. Ink is far better than pencil. It allows finer, smaller writing, and a good fountain pen requires little pressure on the point. You may want to read your notes in ten years' time. For this reason, too, the notes should not be too abbreviated. Coherent English might take a little longer to write, but it saves time in the end. Get into the habit of making neat notes right away. A slovenly habit is difficult to break.

It is a good plan to make a full note as to the name, author, date, publisher, etc., of any books used. It may be necessary to refer to them again, and much time will be lost if a note has not been thus taken.

As regards the actual form of notebook, the author prefers using cards, writing one item of information on each. Random thoughts can thus be written one after the other on the cards just as the inspiration strikes one. Afterwards the cards can be sorted out, and facts arranged in their order of importance. Such plain, unruled cards, measuring about  $4\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$  in., can be obtained at 4d. a hundred. There is no need to pay more for a more glossy quality. Only one side of the cards should be written on. When finished with, the writing can be crossed through with a blue pencil and the other side used. These cards are easier to handle than similar slips of paper.

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At the top of each card, the subject of inquiry should be written. This is tedious to do by hand several hundred times, so use can be made of a printing set as used by children. A title such as KEATS' BIOGRAPHY can easily be set up, and sub-titles such as Parentage, Education, etc., composed too, if you anticipate having several dozen such cards.

It is essential to have a cardboard box in which to file the cards, otherwise they will soon become in a chaotic condition and of little value. A visit to a shop dealing in office requisites will settle this point. For other information about filing, see also "Press Cuttings," p. 60, and "Annotating Books," p. 78.

If a notebook is used, let it be of the loose-leaf variety, and one in which the leaves are held firmly by press studs or springs, not by rings from which the perforated leaves soon break away. A good plan is to write the main notes on the right-hand pages, leaving the left-hand side for extra notes and comments which crop up afterwards. It is a wise plan to carry around a little pocket notebook to record various ideas and scraps of information one casually picks up, before they are forgotten.

### *Skipping and Skimming*

Having obtained the books, the researcher might be appalled at the amount of matter he has to wade through. The books, however, are intended to be used as much as they are needed and no more. Thus if we wish to find out something about Horsham, there is no need to read through a whole History and Topography of Sussex. We just read that page or two which carries the information we want. In some works this is easily done by referring to an index. Other subjects do not lend themselves so easily to this.

There are three ways of dealing with a book.

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(a) We may study it. That is, we read through it carefully and systematically, learning, in a critical way, all the information it contains.

(b) We may "skim" it. That is, we go through it in a general way, missing whole pages (sometimes whole chapters), alighting on paragraphs here and there and getting a rough idea of its contents. Most readers do this to all new books. By this means we can see whether the book is likely to contain the matter we require.

(c) "Skipping" is similar to the foregoing except that we do not even go through the whole book, however rapidly. We just read passages which concern us.

The question of whether this is fair to the author, and other objections of this type, do not apply to us here. We are not reading for pleasure or diversion, but to dig out facts. Different books yield to different treatments. The remark by Bacon that some books are to be tasted, etc., is too trite to be worth repeating. Considerable experience is needed in skipping and skimming, but it is an art which the research worker will sooner or later acquire. The eye alights on certain key words.

### *Use of the Index and Table of Contents*

A good index is a great time-saver, but unfortunately many books have not an adequate index. Good indexes are models of industry. Some authors do not try. The index is often compiled by the author's wife or secretary, and the author, resting from his labours, thinks the index of small account. He might even be offended if people just referred to his book for a mere paragraph or two, instead of reading the deathless words of the book from page one to finis.

The least satisfactory of indexes are those which appear like this—

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Belfast, 78, 86, 117, 174, 185, 198, 204  
Belfort, 35, 66, 307

We may be looking for details of Belfast shipyards, and have to wade through all the references before we have exhausted our inquiry. Although we might strike lucky, and find references to the shipyards on page 78, how can we be sure that there are no further details on page 204? And, furthermore, how are we to know that there are any references to shipyards at all? Of course, the entries may be cross-referenced, and on turning over a few pages we may find—

Shipyards, 117, 215, 219.

At first sight we cannot tell which, if any, refers to Belfast.

A far better type of index is one set out like this—

### Belfast

Arms of the City	.	.	185
General description	.	.	78
High street	.	.	198
Linen industry	.	.	174
Protestant Cath.	.	.	204
Queen's University	.	.	86
Shipyards	.	.	117

The information is thus found at a glance, and we know what is, and what is not, in the book.

Another valuable form of index is that where the contents of each chapter are analysed, either at the beginning of the chapter or in the Table of Contents. Thus—

### CHAPTER VII

Page 69

St. Bruno, 11th cent. saint—His birthplace at Cologne—Becomes high church dignitary—Decides to go into retirement with six others—The Bishop of Grenoble gives him valley of Chartreuse—He founds Carthusian order—His good works—His death.

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Here is almost a “potted” biography of the man. An admirable arrangement, especially if coupled with a good index as well.

Another arrangement seen in some textbooks is to have a brief synopsis of each few paragraphs set in small type in the margin or inset into the paragraphs themselves. In many books, as in the present volume, the material is split up into convenient sections, and each one clearly labelled for easy reference. Get to know of these short cuts.

Make sure you are looking at the right index. Sometimes there are two or more indexes: a list of place-names and a list of persons, etc. Where there are several volumes, the index is usually in the end of the last volume. Ascertain whether there are any supplements.

### *Alternative References in Index*

This is a VERY important point to grasp, and one which will serve the research worker in good stead. Cultivate the habit of thinking in analogous terms. In these days when “crosswords” are commonplace, this is not difficult.

Suppose we are looking up the properties of Oak in a reference book, and fail to find it. What else can we call oak? Try Timber, Wood, or perhaps Furniture.

Take another example—Fretwork. This might appear under its own heading, or else in Arts and Crafts, Hobbies, Handwork, Woodwork, etc.

Butterflies in Sussex? Try (in any guide book) Sussex—Flora and Fauna.

Butterfly Collecting? Try Hobbies, Nature Study, Collections, Pastimes, etc.

The above are quite simple, but, as we have seen in the section on Catalogues, it can become complex.

Take for example a report of the Department of

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Scientific and Industrial Research. This is a Stationery Office report, and the S.O. is a Government Department—the *English* Government. The report is therefore catalogued under “England”: subdivision “Dept. of Scientific and Industrial Research.” Admittedly not easy for a novice to work out, but this line of reasoning will be developed after some months of acquaintance with library catalogues.

The Society of Arts is a Learned Society of London. Therefore its publications are listed under “London,” subdivision “Learned Societies,” further subdivision, “Society of Arts.”

Most good indexes have obvious cross-references indicated. For example—

Baden Powell, Lord (see Boy Scouts)  
Queensland (see Australia)

Many research workers have failed to find what they want through not being imaginative enough to look up alternative entries in indexes.

A first glance at the Table of Contents and index, should reveal several things: Who is the author? His status? The date of publication?

Does the Contents List show that it is likely to contain the information you require? You might already know the work.

### *Plan of the Book*

All readable books are written to a plan. A history book is usually written in a chronological order, a travel book according to the itinerary described, technical books from simple to complex. The preface may give some clue. The author generally calls attention to any special features of the book. The first chapter is generally an introductory survey. In many cases it contains just that bird’s-eye view of the matter that we

## *Using the Books: Note-taking*

want. In a well-written book, the chapters should form clear-cut divisions.

A word on book "series" might not be out of place here. Often this word is applied to a miscellaneous collection of books which have little in common except their size and price. A true "series" consists of books related to each other, written around some central theme (such as Common Commodities, Modern Poets, Socialist Viewpoint, etc.), and of equal value as regards status of writer, manner in which subject is viewed (elementary, complex, etc.), as well as agreeing in such mundane matters as size and price.

### *Speed in Reading*

It might be thought that speed in reading is an advantage. So it is providing that one understands what one has read. It is hardly likely that any would-be research worker is a very slow reader—one who "speaks silently," i.e. repeats to himself, all the words he reads. The average rate of reading is around 300 words a minute, though a lot depends on whether the reading matter is "light" or "heavy." In some works, writers choose their words very carefully. Each word must be given its weight, and though the writing is not dull, it is less easily read than a light novel where we can skip words at a time without losing the thread of the narrative.

Heaven knows there are some frightfully dull works which the research worker must tackle in the course of investigations. Judicious "skipping" may lighten the task. Do not forget that some books are written especially for advanced students but do not always blame yourself if the writer is not always clear. It is a wonder how some writers get into print. Skim through the "difficult" book as best you can if you cannot find a simpler one. Then read another. The one may contain rays of sunshine to lighten the shadows of the other.

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Habitual readers get into the habit of seeing two or three words ahead. They read by sight and not by sound. Speed in reading is a good thing provided it is not made at the expense of clear understanding of what is being read.

### *Annotating Books*

Readers are by no means in agreement as to whether books should be annotated, except that library, or otherwise borrowed, books, should NEVER be marked. Some hold that a book becomes more personal if one's notes and comments are written in it. What if it does spoil the appearance of the pages? We are not reading the paper and printer's ink: we are reading some writer's thoughts, and by annotation infuse our own into them. Others hold that annotation often defeats its own ends. We may make notes on the flyleaf and margins to our heart's content, but by the time we have so annotated dozens of books, we should need a large index to our copious notes.

In my own case, in fact, I use a sort of index. I take a book at random from my shelves. It turns out to be *Vagabond*, a collection of "open road" essays by J. B. Morton. I remember reading it at intervals on a walking tour, and as particular paragraphs and thoughts appealed to me, I scribbled down their position on the flap of the dust jacket. Thus I see—

Hats, 79.  
Soul of the Parks, 40.  
Inn Names, 85.  
Silence, 316.

There were about two dozen such references. In this case they happen to be mostly abstract thoughts, but naturally they vary according to the book.

I therefore prepare some cards for my file index—one for each item. One would read thus—

### *Using the Books: Note-taking*

INN NAMES. See "Vagabond." J. B. Morton. 6 g. 7.  
Inns: ? soon be all "hotels." p. 85.

The 6 g. 7 is the "Press Mark," which means that in my library the book will be found in bookcase number six, on the seventh (g) shelf, seventh from the left. In the case of a book at a public library, I usually add its press mark, so that I am saved the trouble of looking up the catalogues again should I have further occasion to use the book.

On this same card, I will write down all other references to Inn Signs I come across, all books on the subject I have, all photographs of inn signs I have in my files, and a star to denote that I have Press cuttings as well. Thus when I come to write on Inn Signs, I have a wealth of information to go by.

All this takes time, but, as explained in the section on Press Cuttings, a professional writer should devote at least one evening a week to the business. It is not a profitless task. On the contrary, it is a sound investment. Possession of a well-indexed file and library is a valuable asset to a working writer. Articles practically "write themselves." This does not mean to say that all one has to do is to pick the brains of other writers. As random thoughts occur, they should be committed to paper before they flee away. Some people keep a Journal or Commonplace book. Others record their thoughts directly to the index cards of their file.

Take the same subject—Inn Signs—again. I was passing an establishment called the "Star and Garter," just as a motorist was driving away. In an idle moment, it occurred to me that the inn, in these modern, motor-ing days, should be renamed the "Car and Starter." I scribbled this "gem" of wit in my notebook, and thence on the INN SIGNS card in the index. A couple of years later I was able to use it in an article. I should have forgotten it otherwise.

## CHAPTER IX

### *Other Sources of Information*

WHILST there are thousands of people who would be willing to impart whatever specialized information they possessed to reasonable inquirers, and whilst there are many officials of various societies and institutions whose duty it is to be useful in this way, there are others who would resent such demands on them. And rightly so, as many professional men such as architects, doctors, lawyers, etc., sell their information as a means of livelihood and cannot afford to give it away free.

#### *Personal Inquiries: Tact Needed*

A research worker should never be so tactless as to expect professional men to answer professional questions except in the usual way of their business. In the same way, certain societies are formed, and financed, by kindred souls to protect and advance their own interests. They often possess valuable stores of information, which they naturally preserve for the benefit of their own members.

On the other hand, there are societies formed to foster and publicize some object. It may be an attempt to establish bird sanctuaries, free dental clinics for Esquimaux, to encourage an interest in the works of some literary person, to reform some law or the other. There are thousands of these societies. Some are very active in their propaganda, and maintain effective publicity departments.

Apart from societies, as such, there are publicity bureaux maintained by the railway companies; steamship lines; Post Office; federations of electricity, gas,

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transport, etc., interests; Colonial and Dominion offices; similar offices acting for foreign countries, and countless other sources of information. The banks have information services for their clients. Many stores and newspapers run information bureaux.

A great number of addresses of these offices can be obtained from "Whitaker." If in doubt as to the offices of some foreign country's publicity bureau, address the inquiry through the legation or embassy.

For inquiries about local government affairs, apply to individual councillors, if you know any, or to the Town Hall otherwise. Citizens have a right to know what is going on, and very often this information is published. In small communities where the demand for printed reports would not justify the expense, a few typewritten copies are made. One is almost invariably in the local head library.

As mentioned before, public librarians are only too willing to answer inquiries to the best of their ability, whilst museum and art gallery officers usually take a very broad view of their duties, and often, if they are enthusiasts (as they usually are), they take delight in corresponding with another interested person.

One can 'phone up the public libraries and ask a question, but unless it is the type of question that can be answered almost *ex cathedra*, one should give one's telephone number with the request that one should be rung up when the information is available.

Large commercial and industrial concerns often have their own publicity bureaux and excellent research libraries. One could not very well ask a big transport company for details of their running costs. This would be rather impudent. Yet if one were interested in transport history, the company would probably be pleased to answer inquiries about their early vehicles. They might be willing to give general information as

to their future plans. It is all a question of tact. The research worker should ask the question, "If I were in the other fellow's shoes, would *I* give the information? Would the information, if published, create a favourable interest in my business, or would it be scattering hard-learnt experience to the winds—to be used by my business rivals?"

Usually the information creates favourable public interest, and it is therefore a good policy to answer all reasonable inquiries. If the researcher cannot find the desired information in print, personal inquiry may therefore be made to the right quarter, provided that the question does not presume upon the professional status of the one inquired of, and is not calculated to take up too much time in drafting the reply. To this end, inquiries should be specific, brief and to the point. Whilst toadying and heaping up of flattery is very objectionable, it is hardly necessary to mention that letters of inquiry should be couched in polite terms so as to give the recipient the impression that the question is to be answered as a favour, and not as a right.

Very often such letters of inquiry will be unanswered. They may have been ignored or overlooked. Some people find actual writing rather irksome, and put off answering until they finally forget it. The present writer never reminds people thus written to that they have forgotten to reply. There are nearly always other people to write to, and it has been his very pleasant experience to find that the majority of people are most polite, helpful, and encouraging.

Occasionally it may be necessary to elicit the actual information verbally. Often this is done informally—e.g. a chat with a museum curator. When done formally, it borders on the work of a professional interviewer and reporter, a subject a little outside the scope of this present book. There is a distinct technique in

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interviewing. First, the time and place of interview are important. For all professional men and women it is essential to obtain an appointment, not only to make sure that the subject is at home, and is willing to talk, but in order that he or she may be in the right mood, and prepared for the questions.

For the purposes of social surveys, etc., where working people, housewives, and so on, have to be interviewed, it is as well to drop on them suddenly and, with a polite introduction, start questioning right away. They are not used to being interviewed, and if a formal appointment was fixed, they would be in a state of some tension. Of course, it is quite likely—it often happens—that one is regarded as a busybody and treated with some suspicion. Answers are given doggedly and discouragingly. After all, one has only oneself to blame. These people did not ask to be questioned. The interviewer must be rather thick-skinned. “You’re a reporter, eh? Well there’s the door behind you!”

Whilst some people are shy, diffident or even hostile, there are others who are affable, and even garrulous. Sometimes it is as well to let them run on and on, as they then reveal themselves in their true light, and express their opinion without restraint, making use of their particular idiom and way of speech. At other times it is necessary to elicit some definite information, and if the question is likely to be a somewhat daring one, lead up to it gradually. The interviewer should be master or mistress of the situation, and have a carefully prepared list of questions to be asked—to be referred to if either the interviewer or the interviewed becomes tongue-tied, or if the interview deviates from its straight course.

A few notes are necessary, and, indeed, some people are offended if the interviewer does not produce a fat notebook and a sharpened pencil ready to take down

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their priceless gems of learning and opinion. On the other hand, some people "dry up" when they see all their words being taken down. They fear they may have committed themselves to certain observations they might afterwards regret. They become cautious. It should hardly be necessary to remark that if the interview is to be published, the "copy" should be submitted to the interviewed one, for approval.

Interviewing the famous is for the experienced professional reporter, as a rule. The research worker is far more likely to have a friendly chat with various folk, rather than formal interviews. Although a penchant for asking questions is useful for those whose business it is to gather information, to be a *good listener* is just as important.

### *Museums*

These can be very useful to research workers. In fact, it is their aim. Far too many people regard museums as places of mild educational enjoyment, to be "done" one wet afternoon, or in company with a country cousin, and then afterwards forgotten. These people will wander haphazardly through various saloons and galleries, trying, but conscious of failing, to take some real interest in illuminated MSS., Japanese weapons, Etrurian pottery, prehistoric flints, Egyptian mummies, and various other exhibits. All that can be said for this "doing" a museum, is that it enables one to see, however sweepingly, something of the world's culture both ancient and modern.

Museums are usually specialized, or, if in the main general, have special collections for which they are noted. We have the Science Museum, the Natural History Museum, the Victoria and Albert (for Art), Geoffrye Museum (old English furniture), the London (London life), etc. Museums collect specimens and

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exhibits not for the idle gaze of sightseers with nothing better to do, but for the benefit of students who can gain better information about many things by actually seeing and handling them. There are a number of small-town museums whose collections are very uninspired and literally warrant the accusation "dry and dusty," but there are others who have admirable collections illustrating bygone local industries, relics of local history, etc.

### MUSEUM CATALOGUES

The museum is thus a great reference book. Its catalogue, issued at a modest price, and often well illustrated, is a gold mine of authoritative facts. Some are practically textbooks on the subject, and even if one lives hundreds of miles away from the actual exhibits, the photographs and other illustrations make up this lack. It is a good plan to secure a catalogue of publications from those museums in which you are interested. Much information can thus be obtained which is not elsewhere published. The British Museum issue several relating to antiquities of the Ancients. The Victoria and Albert Museum have guides to rings, English porcelain, ironwork, lace, woodwork, etc.

### CO-OPERATING WITH THE CURATOR

Just as one should make friends with local librarians, so one should make friends with the curator, and never hesitate to ask intelligent questions about the exhibits. This book is mainly concerned with the gathering of information for definite research work and not only ephemeral and topical journalism. Chats with the curators and caretakers, however, will often bring to light strange, interesting, and curious facts about individual exhibits, their collectors, queer visitors, various donors of specimens, etc., all of which, properly

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handled, make acceptable contributions to the popular Press.

### RESEARCH WORK AT MUSEUMS

All museums have some sort of laboratory and workshop, however small. In the National Museums they are often very extensive, and engage expert chemists, etc. If one has found a strange coin, fossil, bug, etc., which cannot easily be identified from the usual reference books, it can often be sent to museums for identification.

It must not be assumed that the museum will act willingly as unpaid valuers, etc., for people who have only a commercial interest in the objects. They hope that they may be sent a rare or unique specimen, and they will then have as much interest in the matter as you.

In all cases, send the actual specimen along if possible.

### MUSEUM LIBRARIES AND INQUIRIES

Many museums, such as the British, Science, and Victoria and Albert, have regular libraries attached. Others have small, semi-private collections of books which interested people can use. In many cases the curators and directors of various departments can give valuable information concerning the field of knowledge covered by their department. This type of inquiry has just been dealt with under "Personal Inquiries."

A book which provides much valuable information is **The Libraries, Museums and Art Galleries Year Book.**

### *Desk Books*

The **Writers' and Artists' Year Book** has been mentioned elsewhere. Other useful books are: **Herd, H.,**

### *Other Sources of Information*

**The Writer's Desk Book, and The Author's, Playwright's and Composer's Handbook.**

#### *“Where to Find It” Books*

A few of these have been issued, and certain year books have compiled imposing lists of various sources of information on practically every topic except that which one is interested in. A really good attempt—perhaps the best so far—is **The ASLIB Directory (1928)**.

This was issued by the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux of London. Here are set out collections of material arranged under subjects, lists of places where such material is to be found, and an index to the collectors and named collections.

#### *Miscellaneous General Source Books*

**Eason, A. B., Where to Seek for Scientific Facts (Rentell, 1924).**

**Helps to Students of History (S.P.C.K. from 1918).**

#### *“Curious” Books*

There are many books wherein the authors have, with incredible industry, collected thousands of curious facts for the diversion and amazement of a gaping world. Such books are worth noting, as they may contain facts needed to fill up gaps in one's inquiry. Examples of these are—

**Brewer, E. C., Dictionary of Phrase and Fable.**

**Brewer, E. C., Reader's Handbook**

(and several more books of this nature by same writer).

**Walsh, W. S., Curiosities of Popular Customs.**

**Walsh, W. S., A Handy Book of Curious Information.**

**Walsh, W. S., A Handy Book of Literary Curiosities.**

**Walsh, W. S., Heroes and Heroines of Fiction.**

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**Timbs, John, A Popular Dictionary of Facts and Knowledge.**

**Timbs, John, A Million of Facts.**

**Timbs, John, Things Not Generally Known.**

There are also books of the "Inquire Within" type.

### *Book "Outlines"*

It is often necessary to know, in a nutshell, what a book is about, without having to read it right through. There are several (chiefly children's) books, such as **Tales from Shakespeare**, but an example of book outlines useful to the research worker is **Outlines of Great Books**, edited by Sir J. A. Hammerton. (Amalgamated Press, Ltd.)

This is described as "comprising two hundred and fifty of the World's Most Famous Works of History, Philosophy, Science, Religion, Poetry, Biography, Travel, and Criticism, Outlined in their Authors' Own Words. With a Portrait Gallery of the Authors."

Two useful books giving well-written outlines of fiction books are Keller, Helen Rex, **The Reader's Digest of Books** (Macmillan Co., New York, 1929), and Baker, Ernest A., and Packman, James, **Guide to the Best Fiction, English and American, including Translations from Foreign Languages**.

### *Date of Book*

This, of course, is important to the research worker. A book without a date is annoying to reader and librarian, yet any number of books go out into the world without dates. One is usually justified in thinking that this is not an oversight, but is done deliberately so that the publishers can palm off old books as new. Books bearing a date *a year ahead* of their real issue are not unknown!

The real date of issue can sometimes be ascertained

## *Other Sources of Information*

from important catalogues, either those in libraries or those sometimes issued by the big people of the second-hand book trade.

### *Trade Catalogues*

These often contain descriptions, prices, illustrations, and other data unobtainable elsewhere, and are therefore worth keeping. Many libraries now collect them, and the present writer, for one, has found old catalogues and trade lists of great value in certain kinds of research—such as looking up old-time tools. They range from single sheets, through booklets of all sizes, up to great volumes the size of a Family Bible. In order to raise them from the ranks of mere lists and prices—to be thrown away when out-dated—enterprising sales managers incorporate many pages of most useful technical information, tables, diagrams, etc. Thus, if we are looking for certain proportions, dimensions, weights, etc., of, say, iron pipes, and cannot easily find the information in the usual reference books, we may find it in the catalogue of one of the biggest pipe manufacturers. The catalogues, if kept in the home library, should be numbered and an index made. The smaller pamphlets can be stored in small box files made for the purpose.

### *MSS. Sources*

Recorded information need not necessarily be printed in book form. There is any amount of information recorded in handwriting—material which was never intended for public use—such as private diaries, letters, etc. Furthermore, there is MSS. material written before the invention of the printing press.

Many private diaries, letters, etc., are in private hands, and whether we can use them or not is a personal matter, depending on our relations with the

## *Facts and How to Find Them*

owners. If, for example, we are writing the biography of a certain person now dead, we can announce the fact in the "Letters to the Editor" columns of certain literary Sunday newspapers, and appeal to owners of any interesting, unpublished material relating thereto to let us know. If our work is approved, we will be granted access to much useful material.

Ancient deeds, charters, and other MSS. attract the attention of some research workers. Not all such documents are "dry as dust." Behind the crabbed, antique handwriting is the work of some human soul who lived centuries ago. Together with quaint, and very well drawn, monkish illustrations, they give us a good insight into the life, work, play, topography, etc., of bygone ages.

Many museums and public libraries keep old parchment deeds, etc., relating to the district. There is a rightful tendency to return such deed, to the district from which they first emanated. For example, if an old deed relating to a Yorkshire manor was discovered in Essex, it should find a home in a Yorkshire museum or public library. It is not much use in Essex.

There is a special MSS. Department of the British Museum, where dozens of students are always to be found, poring over MSS. Our national repository is

### THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

This contains national records dating from the time of the Norman Conquest, brought together from many sources. The museum and readers' room are open to the public, and classified catalogues are issued.

### THE CITY OF LONDON RECORDS OFFICE

This, housed in the London Guildhall, is regarded as being the finest and most complete collection of ancient municipal archives in existence. There are

### *Other Sources of Information*

charters, statutes, administrative rolls and books from 1252 to the present day; records of the Old Bailey, Guildhall sessions from 1603, financial records from the sixteenth century, together with a wealth of other historical documents. The reading room is open to the public.

Provincial museums and libraries also possess fine collections. Ask your librarian if he knows of such local collections. In addition, religious bodies possess documents which will repay careful study.

As a rule, the deciphering of old MSS. requires special training, but, apart from the actual text, there are also, as just mentioned, illustrations which show not only saints and angels, but people engaged in everyday pursuits. The present writer has gained much useful information on bygone building tools and methods by studying the drawings in illuminated MSS.

In the British Museum (and doubtless at most other large libraries), there is a catalogue which classifies the drawings in illuminated MSS. according to their subject, such as Games, Ploughing, Building Operations, Armour, etc. There are often photographs of important MSS. in other libraries.

### *Ask Yourself Questions*

It is a good mental exercise to set oneself posers, and think of how the desired information could be obtained. For example these are some questions I set myself to pass the time away whilst waiting for a train.

Where could I find out—

Who was President of Mexico in 1896?

What sort of musical notation did the Romans use?

What was the first newspaper published in Norwich?

What is the native population of Johannesburg?

How many books has Mr. Churchill published?

Where was Mr. Arnold Bennett living in 1930?

*Facts and How to Find Them*

What is the most powerful explosive in the world?  
Where could I get an illustration of old St. Paul's  
Cathedral?

To a layman, these questions are terribly "stiff."  
To an expert researcher, they are quite easy. Where, reader, would YOU look? There is no need actually to get the final details. The whole point is, in which direction would you go?

## CHAPTER X

### *Illustrations*

ILLUSTRATIONS are often required either (or both) to ascertain visually what cannot adequately be described in print, or to illustrate some literary work. Apart from the intrinsic information or story contained in the pictures, illustrations improve the look of the printed page. If the illustration has to be reproduced in print, the research worker should have a general idea of the various ways of dealing with illustrations, and know the best and cheapest methods.

There are two main methods—the line block and the half-tone. The first (which is the cheaper, and in many ways the clearer) is used when a drawing or diagram is formed of plain black lines (usually in Indian ink on Bristol board). Intermediate tones are formed by suitable hatching. The “half-tone” block is used for reproducing photographs and wash drawings, such as water-colours. As most of us know, the photographs reproduced in newspapers and magazines are made up of thousands of tiny dots easily visible to the naked eye on the coarser work. The better and more glossy the paper and the finer the “screen,” the less noticeable they are.

Water-colours, old coloured prints, etc., must be photographed, and as different colours behave differently on the camera plates, it is a matter of great care to get a really satisfactory reproduction of coloured drawings or objects.

#### *Photostats*

The photostat is a machine for copying drawings,

### *Facts and How to Find Them*

diagrams, pages of a book, etc. Instead of the usual plate or film, a length of sensitized paper is wound off from the container, and used instead. The "negative" consists of white lines on a black ground, and from this, a positive is printed which gives black lines on a white ground, as in the original. Photostats can be made larger or smaller than the original, and many large museums have the apparatus. Where the demand does not warrant the installation, it will often be found that the librarians have arrangements with a local firm (one with a large drawing office, for example), who will get the prints made at cost price.

The cost is reasonable. The British Museum, for example, charges a shilling for a negative photostat 11 in. x 9 in., and a shilling for each positive. This is the smallest size. There are several larger sizes and the cost rises in proportion. By this means whole pages of rare books may be copied, as well as plates from old volumes, etc.

### *Original Drawings*

The reader who is gifted with a certain amount of skill in drawing may care to provide his own illustrations. Reference should be made to good books on this aspect as there are certain rules to be observed. Drawings should always be at least half as large again as the size they are intended to be reproduced. (The present writer makes his about three times as large.) Lettering, therefore, should be fairly large. How often have we seen maps, etc., with tiny cramped lettering?

There are professional artists and draughtsmen available to work up one's rough sketches, and if one's research work is being published, the publisher will usually recommend or arrange for the drawings to be made.

## *Illustrations*

### *Photograph Agencies*

These exist primarily for supplying photographs to the Press, and have not only their own men to cover "diary" events, but a connexion of free-lances who supply them with news pictures and also others of general interest. A list appears in the **Writers' and Artists' Year Book**, from which it can be seen that some specialize in Nature photographs, some in Architecture, some in Portraits, etc. Their files are very extensive, and should the demand be urgent and worth their while, they will take photographs to order.

As a rule they do not like doing business with private people, but prefer to supply established periodicals, etc. They can be reasonably sure that any prints supplied on approval will be paid for if published. With private people they are never sure where they are.

The usual fee for each reproduction is 10s. 6d. For book illustration, advertisements, etc., special terms apply.

### *Art Galleries*

Most of the big museums run art galleries as well. One is closely linked with the other. If there is no proper "gallery," the illustrations are often filed, and as many as possible framed and hung about the building. Many libraries are proud of their "local" collections, which range from a few old engravings, photographs, and efforts of the local Art School, to elaborate regional surveys. Many have general illustration collections for loan to schools.

The **Victoria and Albert Museum** has a collection of 250,000 photographs, and 45,000 negatives of which prints are available. The **Hampstead Public Library** has a collection of several hundred thousand of Art pictures arranged under school and individual artist.

The **Witt Library**, 32 Portman Square, W.1., has a

collection of nearly half a million photographs and reproductions of works of art, other than Eastern.

An institution of great value to art workers is the **Courtauld Institute of Arts** which is complementary to the Witt Library. The address is 20 Portman Square, W.1. Here are all types of work illustrated, including the Oriental. It is attached to London University and normally only students of the Institute are privileged to use it. Others may, on payment of a fee, become "occasional students" and use the library.

A full list of Art Galleries may be seen in the **Libraries, Museums and Art Galleries Year Book**. The readiness with which various galleries allow their exhibits to be reproduced varies a lot. As a rule they prefer to make their own negatives and supply their own prints, although if the picture has to be photographed specially, they do not charge for the negative. Apart from the cost of the print, however, there is the copyright fee to be considered (about 7s. 6d. for each reproduction, as a rule, though there are other galleries which demand one or two guineas). This is often made even when no copyright exists in the actual picture. The only justification is that the revenue forms an acceptable addition to the Gallery's limited income, whilst, by charging a fee, the picture is not so much likely to be cheapened by over-reproduction. Even if some public galleries do make a profit out of copyright fees, profit is not their aim at all, which is perfect control over all reproductions.

Many great works of art are suitable for illustrating abstract themes such as "Contentment," "A Lazy Summer Afternoon," etc. Victorian artists loved to paint historical subjects. Other groups preferred Madonnas, Peasant Life, Landscapes, etc.

Not all the treasures of our Art Galleries are exhibited on the walls. Many are stored in the cellars.

## *Illustrations*

None but an art expert could hope to know the contents of all of our galleries, but a courteous request to the Director of the Gallery asking his advice as to whether he has any suitable pictures for your theme will usually meet with an equally courteous answer. Catalogues might be consulted too.

### *Lantern Slides*

These can be borrowed from numerous sources, often free of charge, only the carriage having to be paid. The Birmingham Public Library has about 12,500. The Croydon Public Library has about 11,000. Railways, transport companies, newspapers, and various commercial concerns all have lantern slides, usually accompanied by lecture notes.

### *Portraits*

The American Library Association (A.L.A.) Portrait Index analyses over 6000 volumes and shows where some 120,000 portraits of nearly 45,000 different people are to be found.

Historical Portraits, 1400-1850, 4 vols. (1909-1919), is not just an index, but a well-produced collection of actual portraits with short biographical notes.

### *Picture Dictionaries, etc.*

Many encyclopedias are well illustrated. An attempt to form an encyclopedia entirely of pictures was the I See All "Picture Encyclopedia," an alphabetical series of 100,000 pictures of all manner of things and places.

### *Other Sources*

Post cards are issued by Museums, in addition to their illustrated catalogue. (See "Museums," p. 84.)

Finally, although it may seem ludicrous, it is a fact that sets of cigarette pictures may provide us with useful data on many subjects. One or two firms deal in complete sets of cards.



# INDEX

(*Note.* This work has been planned in such clear-cut divisions that the study of the Table of Contents, page 7, is recommended. In this Index, individual books are not mentioned except when they are standard works such as *Whitaker's Almanack* or *The Dictionary of National Biography*. For such a book as the *Alphabetical Register*, the general heading "Bibliographies of English Books" should be consulted; for *The South American Year Book*, reference should be made to "Year Books" generally.)

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